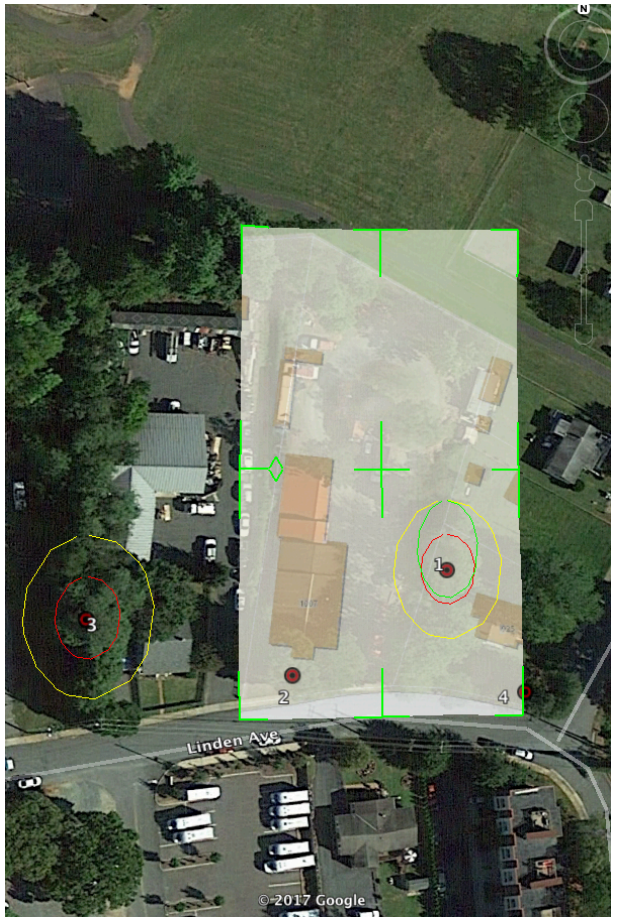
How to Overlay Your Own Tree Data On…

Aerial Photos, Client Surveys, Plat Maps, Zoning Maps, or Just about Anything.

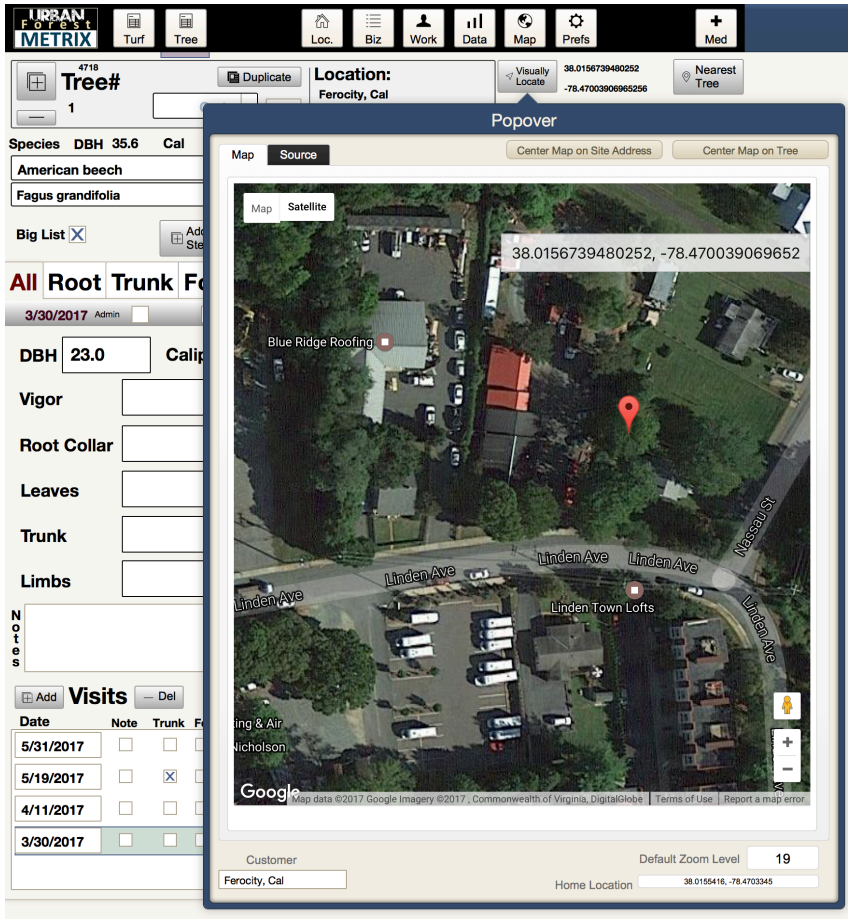


A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Google Earth with Your Own Location Data

Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Start with Your Map Data

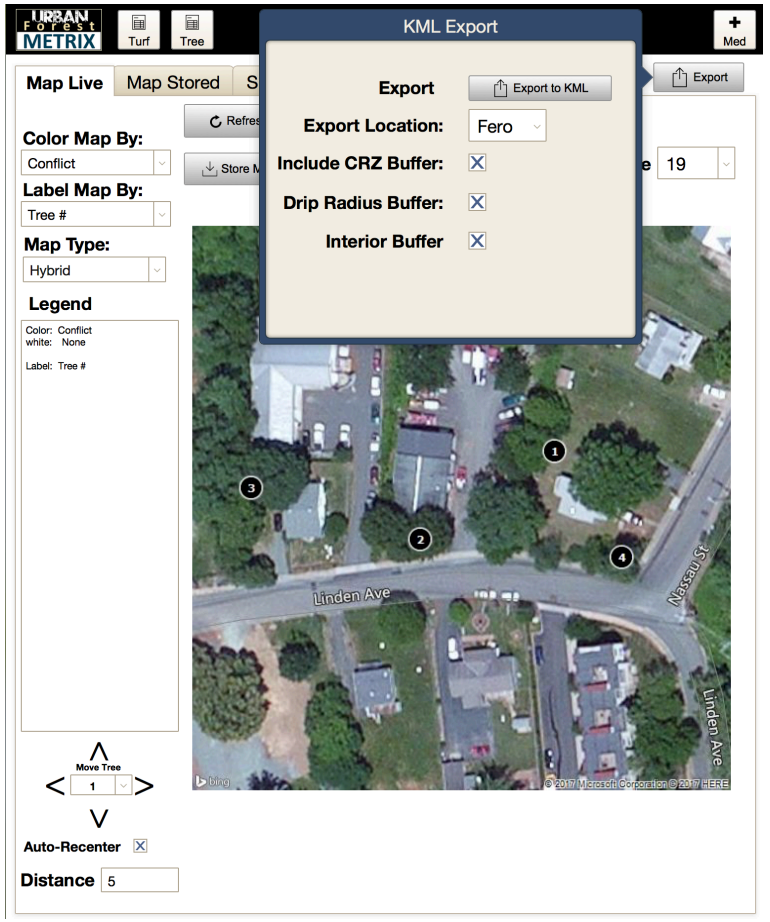
- First thing you need to do is acquire the geolocation data for your trees
  - Optimally, you're using a system that can just export this information in standard format called "KML"
    - See www.forestmetrix.com/wp3 for example for system shown at right
  - Alternately, you can manually enter latitudes and longitudes into Google Earth



WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Export Data to the Standard KML Format

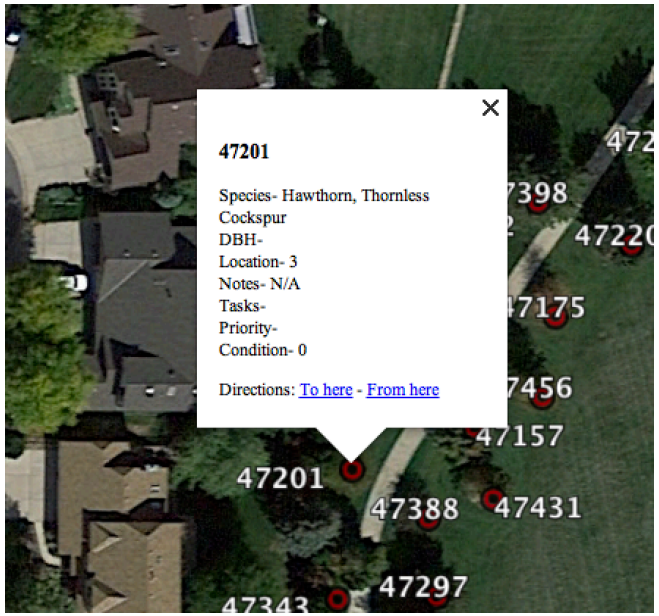
- In Urban Forest Metrix, just click the Export button and choose which data to include….



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Double-Click on the KML File You Just Created to Open it In Google Earth

- Once you open that data up in Google Earth, you will see the points against a picture of the ground…
- Clicking on a point will show the attribute table of that tree…

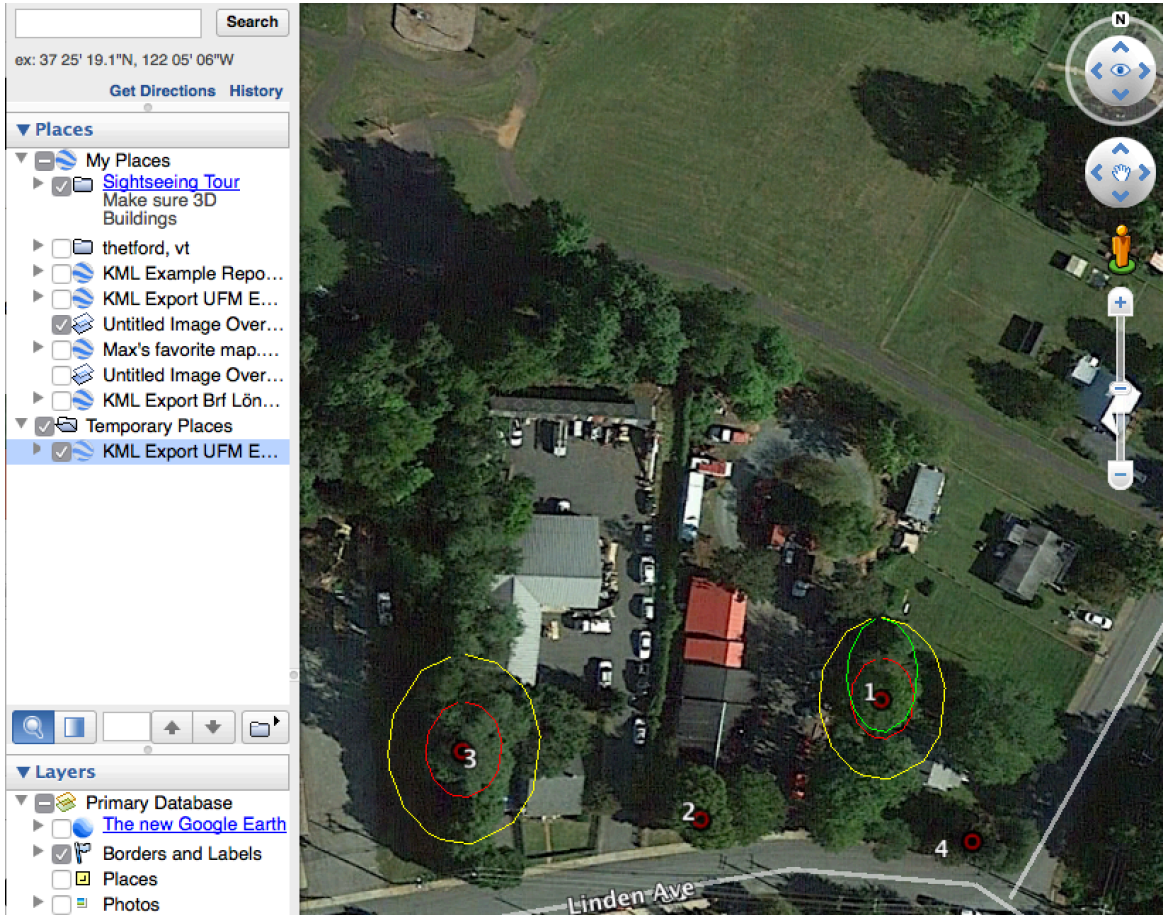


Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Getting Other Maps onto This Map

- Your client may provide you a survey, a map, or you might use the town's zoning and map web page to acquire a map of structures, setbacks and other information. Create a graphic of this (a simple screenshot or phone picture will do) and save it on your hard drive.
- The next steps will show how to load that file into Google Earth and how to manipulate it to match up with Google's "base map."

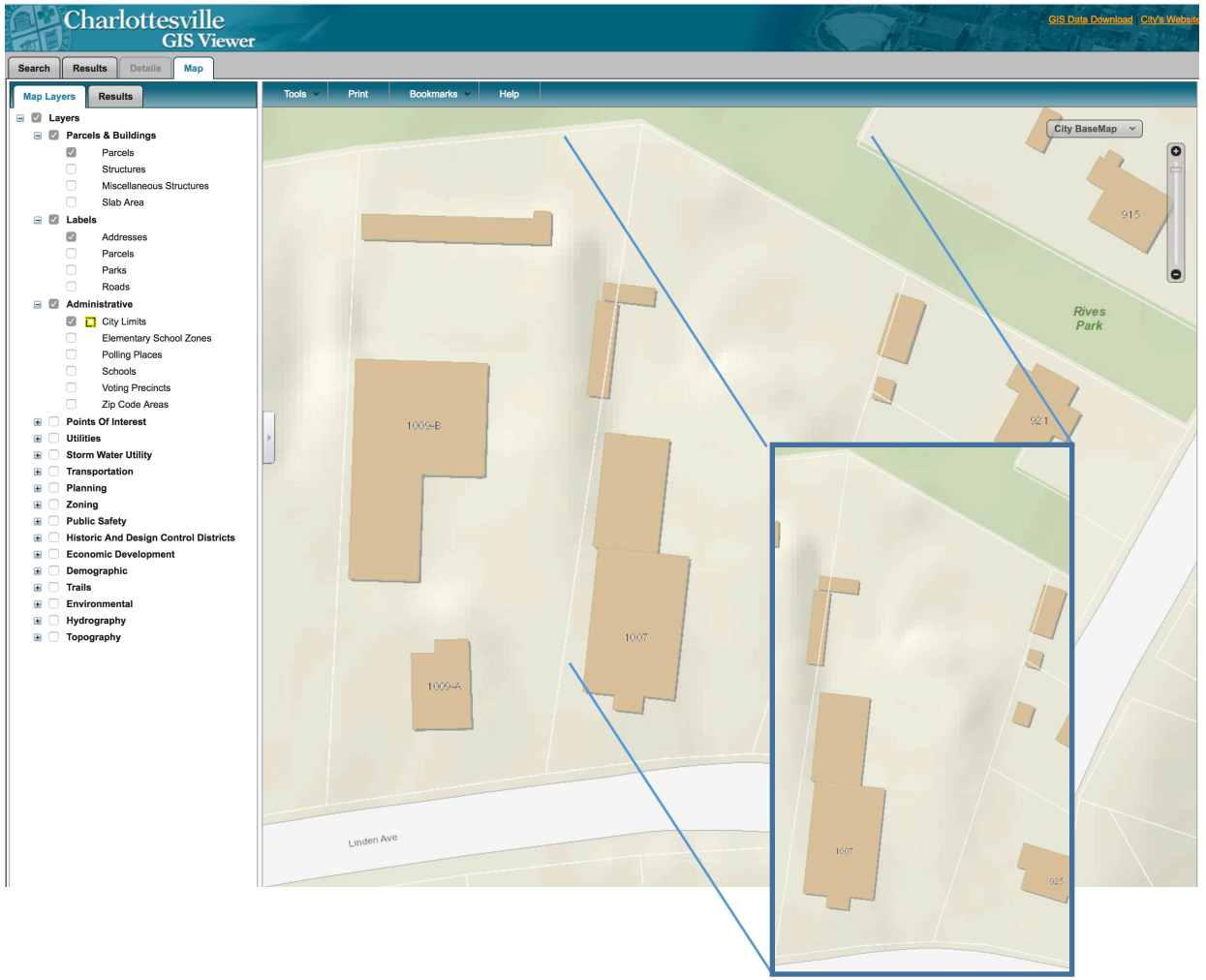
Example: A Couple Trees in Charlottesville, VA



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Map Acquired on Town Website…

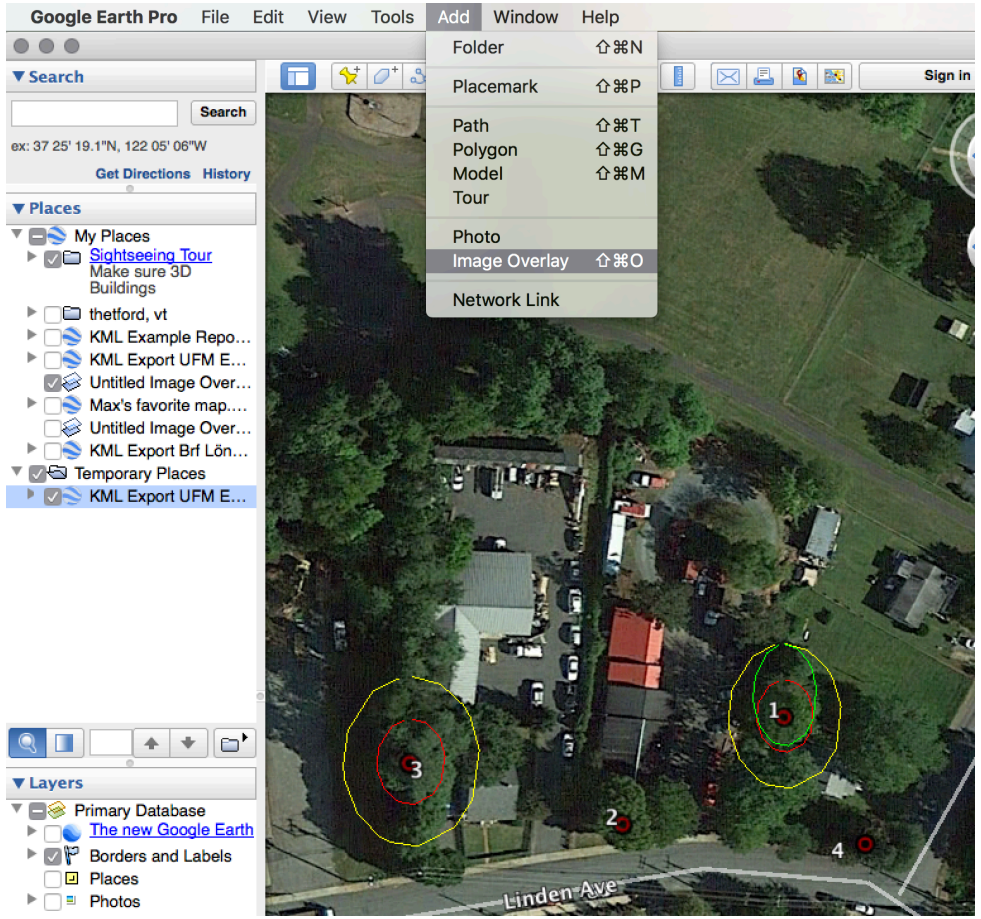
- Most towns now have map viewers available for public access to zoning and/or tax maps
- These are not generally survey-quality maps, but can be about as accurate as your tree placements
- Download the map, or if not an option, take a screenshot of it.



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Add an “Image Overlay” in Google Earth

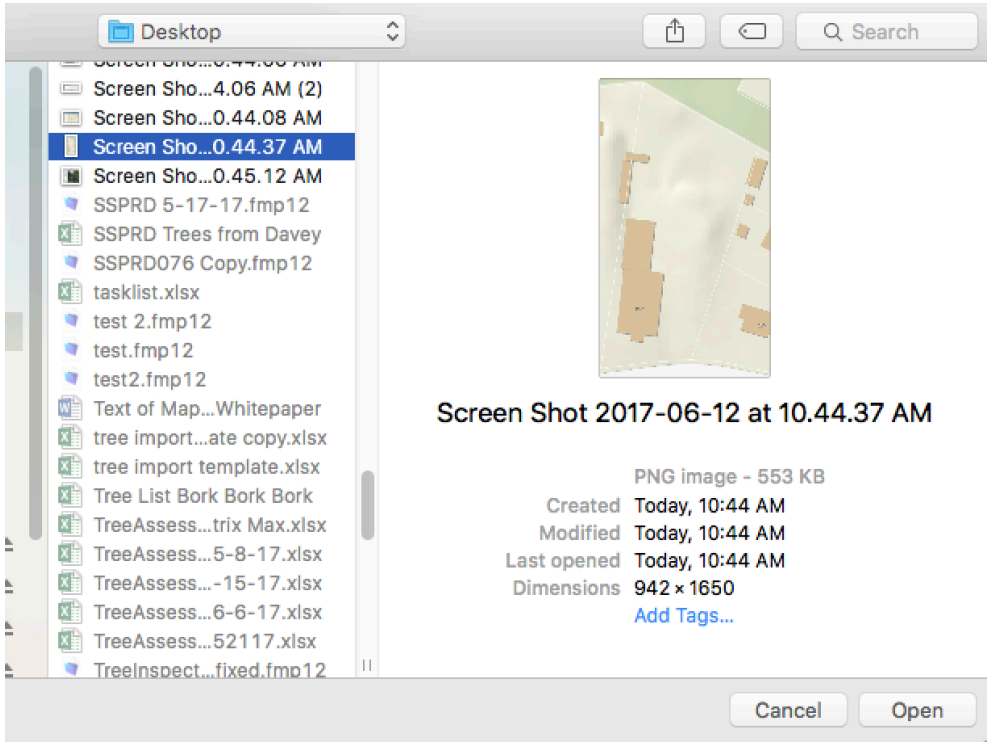
- Choose the “Image Overlay” option from the Add menu in Google Earth…



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Select Your New Map Graphic…

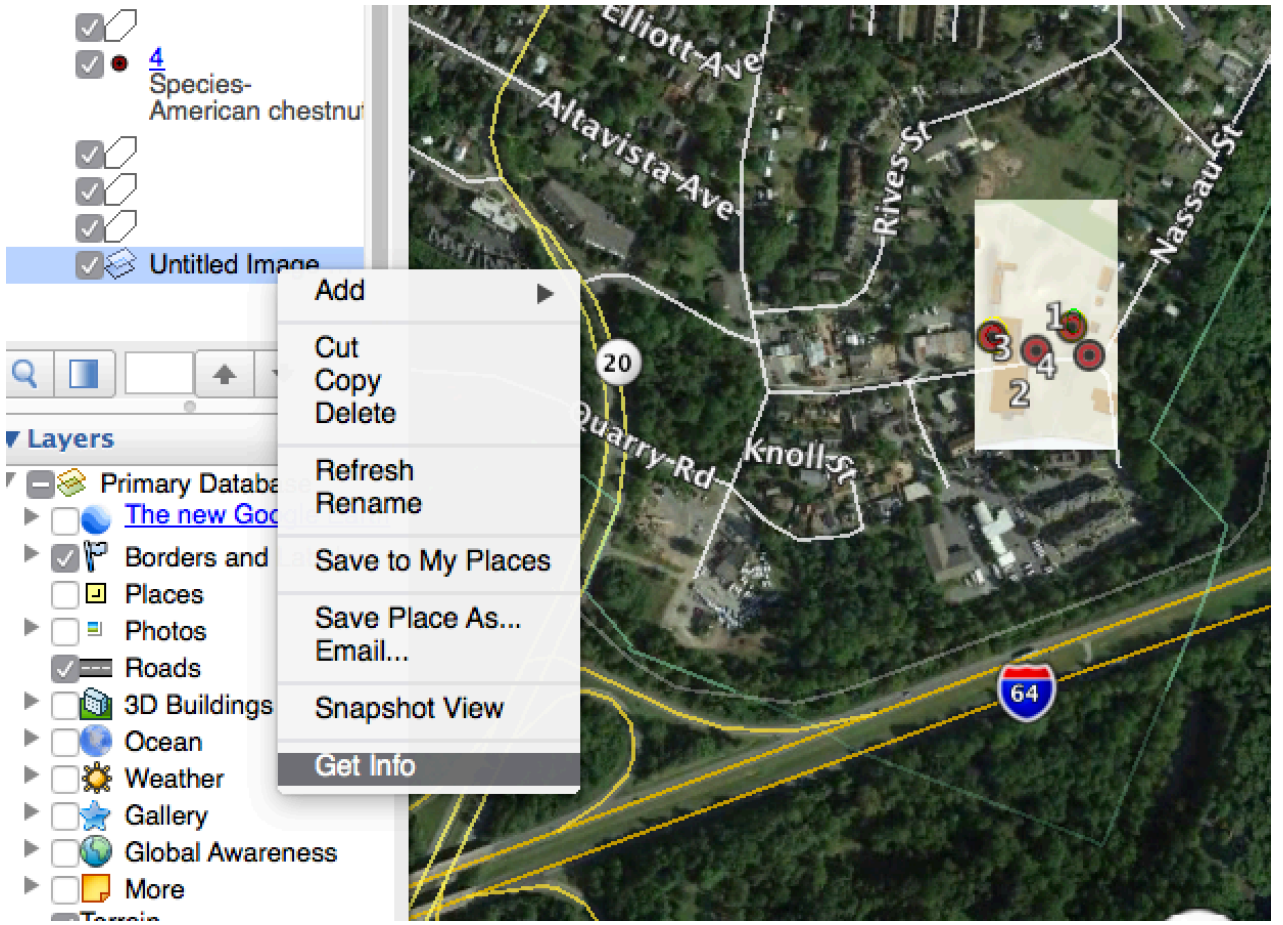
- Navigate to the graphic and select it for inclusion in Google Earth…



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

After the Overlay is Shown on the Screen…

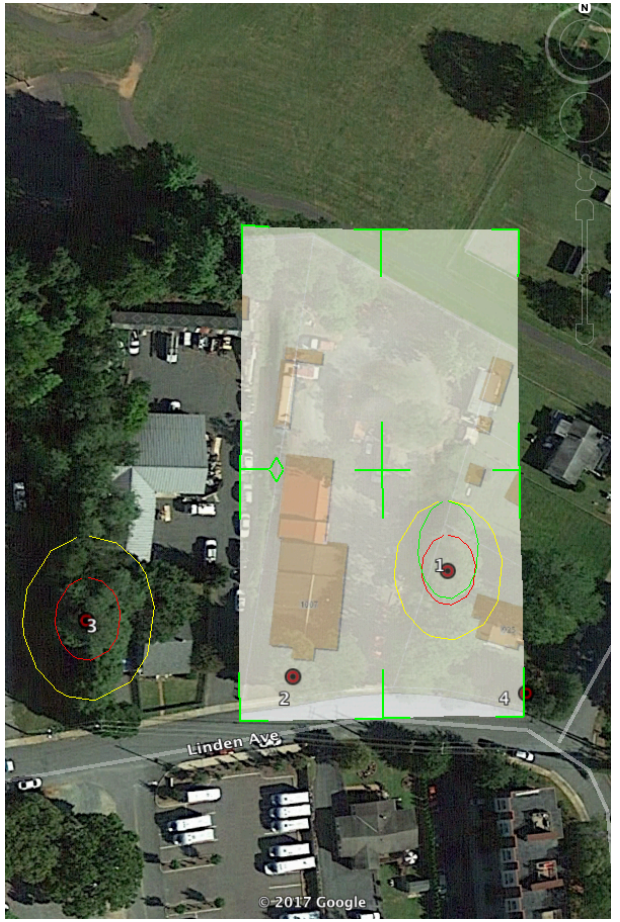
- You will see an “Untitled Image” layer in the left-hand upper window pane that represents this new image
- Select that and control-click (or right-click) to have the pop-up menu appear
- Choose the Get Info option
  - (Alternately Get Info appears at the bottom of the Edit menu)



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Size and Move your Map

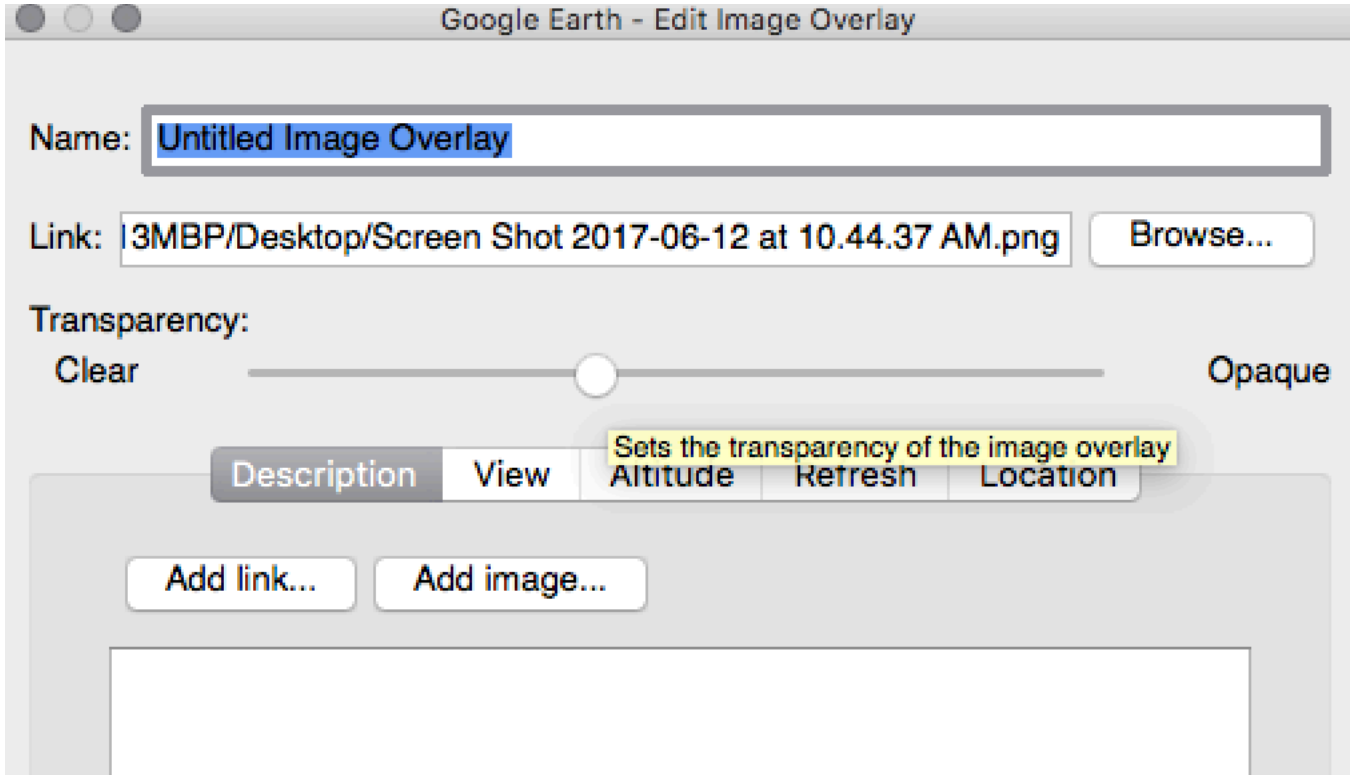
- Under the Get Info mode, your map will show green control points
  - Clicking and holding the cross at the center allows you to move the map overlay
  - Clicking and dragging one of the corners or sides resizes the map
  - Clicking and dragging a corner while the shift key is depressed will resize the map while retaining its width/length proportions (usually advisable)
  - Clicking and dragging the green diamond in the middle left side will allow you to rotate the graphic



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

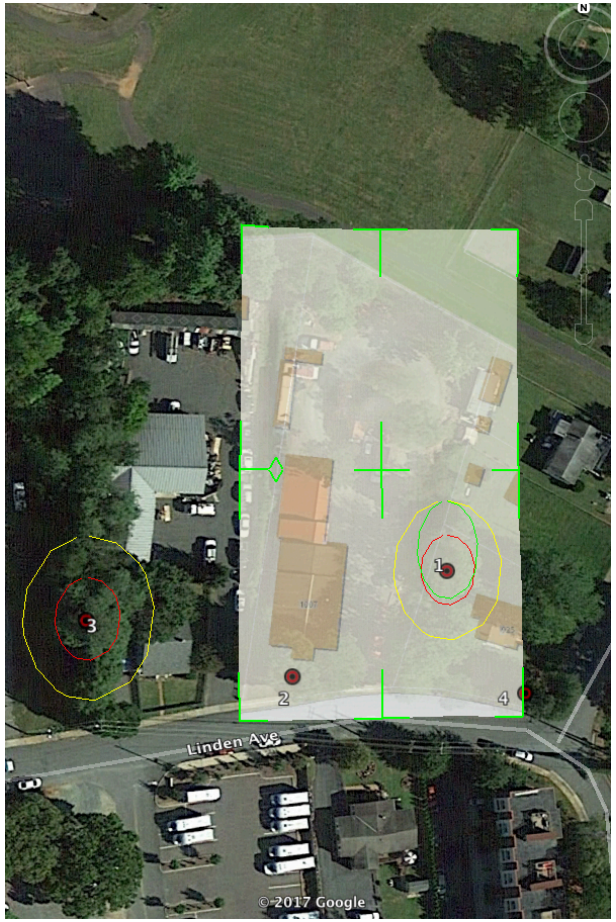
The Get Info Dialog Box Allows Transparancy Control…

- Use the transparency slider to set the relative emphasis of your tree data, the base map and the new image overlay you are editing
- You can always change that later, creating different versions for different purposes



Final Product Examples

- Project plat map example…
- City zoning and land use map example…



Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3

Other Potential Adjustments

- Optimally, your new map will line up with true north, as the Google Earth image is always so aligned
- If not, you may have to take your overlay image and modify it in a simple graphics program…
  - Able to do in Google Earth:
    - Rotation
    - Changing the aspect ratio (the width-to-length ratio)
  - Need to do in a graphics program:
    - Skewing the shape by moving one side left/right or up/down

Want a Walk-Through?

- If you would like to see a walk through, starting from our Urban Forest Metrix software through the mapping process, just let us know.
- Email tig@forestmetrix.com
- See our site at www.ForestMetrix.com/wp3

Forest METRIX
WWW.FORESTMETRIX.COM/WP3