

Mapping Without Limits

ArcGIS Online is a Complete, Cloud-Based Mapping Platform

ArcGIS Online

Overview

ArcGIS Online is a web-based mapping and app-building site created by Esri, one of world's leaders in GIS software. In an effort to empower users of all levels to create interactive maps and applications that are easy to share, Esri developed ArcGIS Online (commonly called AGOL) platform to realize its vision. With both a free version for lay users and an organizational account for larger enterprises, the functionality is tailored to different mapping and application needs. Not only can users create custom maps using their own data, but they can also publish ready-to-use apps that make sharing information easy and intuitive for their audience. This guide explores the capabilities that come with the free version, which is available to anyone with an Esri Global Account.



Apps for Everyone



Ready-to-Use Maps



Visualization



Analytics



Administration



ArcGIS Marketplace



ArcGIS Solutions



Secure and Trusted



Tools for Developers

Setting Up

While you can make maps and applications using ArcGIS Online without an account, your creations will not be saved. For the purpose of this guide, we will set up a free Esri Global Account, which you can use to access ArcGIS Online and all of Esri's training resources.

Note: If you are a part of a university, you may already have an existing organizational account. This is a more powerful version of the free account.*

- Go to <https://www.arcgis.com> and click on Sign In.
- At the bottom of the page, click on Create an account -> Create an ArcGIS public account and fill in the necessary information.
- After creating your profile, you can start using ArcGIS Online.

In this guide, we are going to learn how to create basic maps by using different features such as adding layers, changing the symbology of the layers, as well as creating and sharing web applications. Once you have finished this tutorial, you will have a good understanding of the main functions of ArcGIS Online and can start creating simple maps. You will learn how to utilize online data available through ArcGIS online as well as uploading data from multiple sources.

Note: While the layers and links mentioned in this guide are accurate at the time of publication, resources online break or get changed constantly. If you find that a link does not work or a layer displays different data than this tutorial presents, it is best to search your link or layer online to find a more up-to-date resource. If this fails, please contact Eva Dodsworth at edodsworth@uwaterloo.ca for assistance.

Getting Started

To begin, click the Map link at the top toolbar, next to Scene, on ArcGIS Online. This will pull up a new blank map named “Untitled map” (upper-left corner of Figure 1).

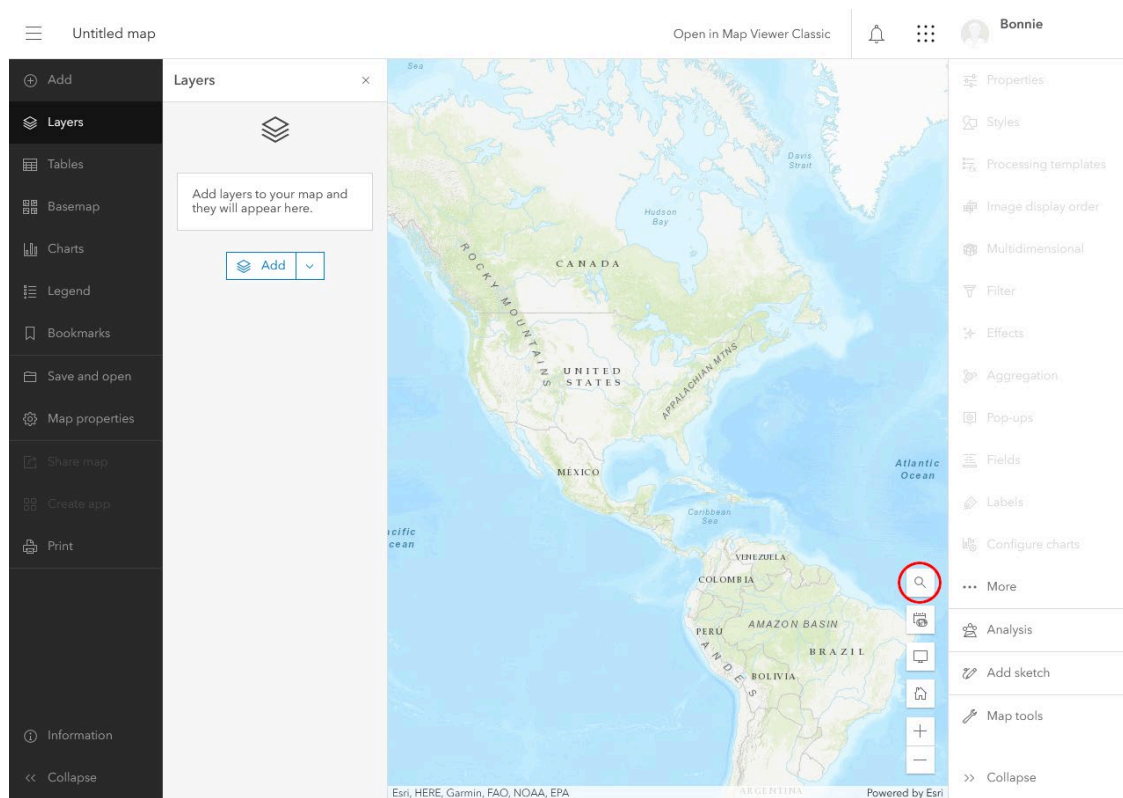


Figure 1 - Default Map Viewer

Take a moment to become familiar with the different parts of your map. Left of the title is a dropdown menu for navigating through ArcGIS Online (the ≡ icon). The top-right-hand corner of the page is your account username with a dropdown menu for account settings. Beside that are the various ArcGIS apps, notifications, and the ability to open Map Viewer in an older layout.

The left sidebar is comprised of two parts: the dark half contains all the major settings, and the light half goes into depth of those settings when clicked on.

The Add button provides a dropdown menu with different options for adding data. The Tables button lets you add non-spatial spreadsheets. The Basemap button allows you to choose from 17 different styles of map that will underlie your data (Topographic is the default). Charts lets you visualize layers of data. Legend explains what different layers represent when added to the map. The Bookmarks tool lets you to save a location by recording the extent and position on the map, allowing you to switch between multiple places.

The Save and Open button will update and save your map as you progressively add more features to your project. The Share Map button pops up a dialog box giving various options for distributing your map. Print takes a snapshot

of the map and its peripheral info for printing.

The right sidebar provides different actions you can take upon your map and future layers. Properties and Effects lets you change how layers visually appear. Analysis lets you analyse the data in different ways. Edit and sketch allow you to change and create features in a layer respectively. Map Tools lets you find the direction between two points with Directions, the distance between two points with Measurement, and the XY coordinates of a point with Location.

Afterwards, you may want to use the Search box to find an address or a place (circled in Figure 1). Navigating the map is easy: *click and drag* to pan the map and *zoom In and out* using the scroll wheel on your mouse.

Picking a Location

For this tutorial, you will be creating a map that displays various parks and popular tourist attractions located in Hawaii's capital, Honolulu. You will be using data primarily from the ArcGIS Online server and the City and County of Honolulu's Open Data Catalogue (<http://honolulu-cchnl.opendata.arcgis.com>).

The first step in working with your map will be to choose a location to work in. To search for an area, click the search icon and a search box will appear. Since we will be using Honolulu, type Honolulu in the box and select "Honolulu, HI, USA (City and County of Honolulu)" (Figure 2).



The image shows a search interface with a text input field containing 'Honolulu' and a magnifying glass icon to its right. Below the input field is a list of search results, each preceded by a small blue square icon. The results are as follows:

Search
Honolulu
Honolulu, HI, USA (City and County of Honolulu)
Honolulu, HI, USA (Honolulu County)
Honolulu, NC, USA
Honolulu, iLembe, Kwazulu Natal, ZAF
Honolulu Makai Hawaiian Home Land, HI, USA
Honolulu Badminton Club, 1336 Dillingham Blvd, Honolulu, HI, 96817, USA

Figure 2 – My Map Search Box

At this point, you should save the map and give it some information. Note that the map extent will also be saved, so make sure you press "Zoom to". Figure 3 displays the map extent that covers the City of Honolulu.



Figure 3 - City of Honolulu View Extent

Click on “Save and Open”, then “Save as” and name the map. You can use the information below (Figure 4) to populate the fields or come up with your own Title (short, but descriptive), Tags (keywords that are used for searching purposes), and Summary (a brief description of what the map is). The saved map can be found under Content -> My Content.

Save map

Title

Parks and Tourist Attractions in Honolulu

Folder

Tags

Honolulu

Hawaii

Oahu

Tourism

Parks

Add tags

Summary

A map displaying parks and popular tourism attractions in Honolulu.

Characters left: 1981

Save

Cancel

Figure 4 - Save Map Pop-up Field

Creating New Data

Now that you have a set location, you can start adding features to your map. To do this, you need to create a sketch layer, which function as editable layers in the map. Click the **“Add”** menu and choose **“Create Sketch layer”** (Figure 5). This opens a menu on the right side of the screen (Figure 6).

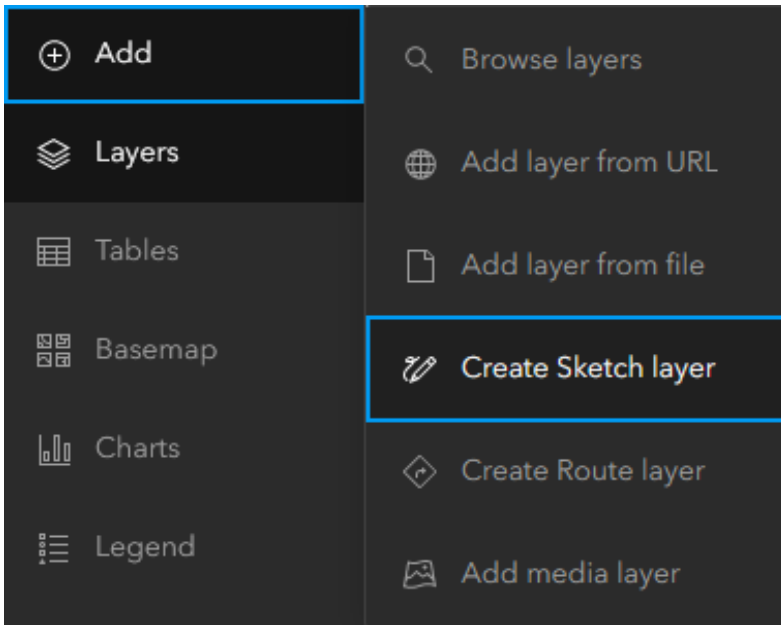


Figure 5 – Add Dropdown Menu – Create Sketch Layer

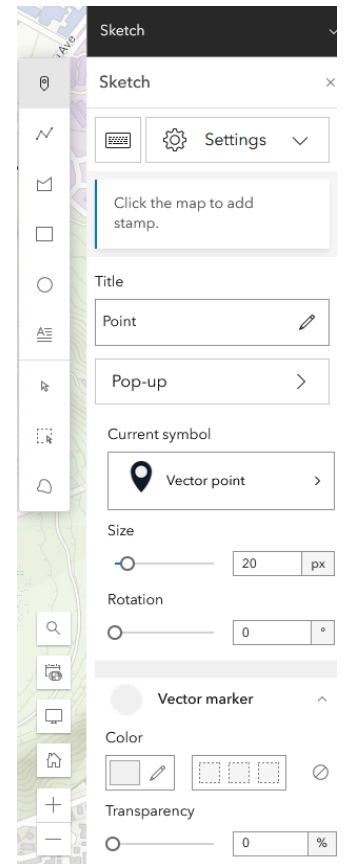


Figure 6 – Point Creation Menu

This new menu on the right contains tools for creating four basic features: Points (referred to as stamps), Lines, Polygons, and Text. You will start by creating a Point feature. Stamp should already be selected by default but can also be chosen with the pointed icon to the left of “Sketch”. Zoom into the Diamond Head State Monument on the Southeastern part of the island and place a stamp there.

To name a stamp, select it using the mouse cursor icon below the Text option, click Pop-up and enable pop ups. From here you can name the point (Title), add a description (Text), and add an image to go along with it (Add Content > Image). Name the Point “Diamond Head State Monument”. You can either leave the description blank or fill it in with a brief overview about the site (Figure 7). If you want to change the appearance of your marker, click **“Vector Point”** under Current Symbol and choose from the various menu options and colors (these options would be good to explore for future reference).

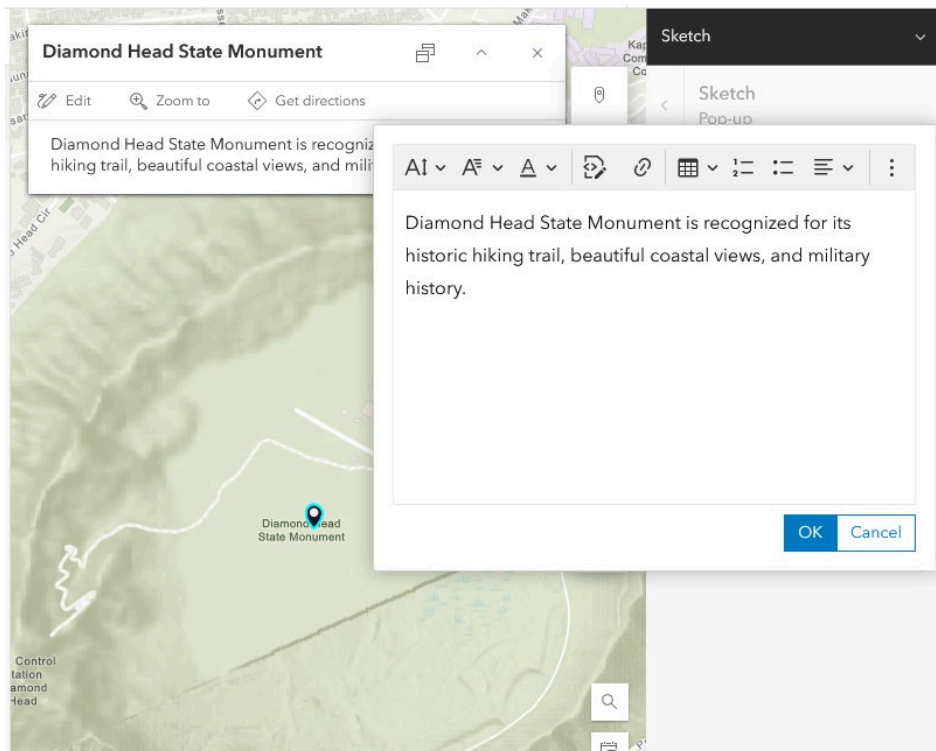


Figure 7 – Editing Pop-Up Description for Point

There are numerous options for adding an Area (also known as a polygon), but the most commonly used tool is “Area”. This tool allows you to draw each vertex of your feature with a click of the mouse (double-click to finish your drawing and close the polygon) or to hold down the mouse and draw the shape by hand. Choose this tool (Figure 8) from the right menu stamps and selection were chosen (third from the top) and draw an area around Honolulu Zoo (Figure 9).

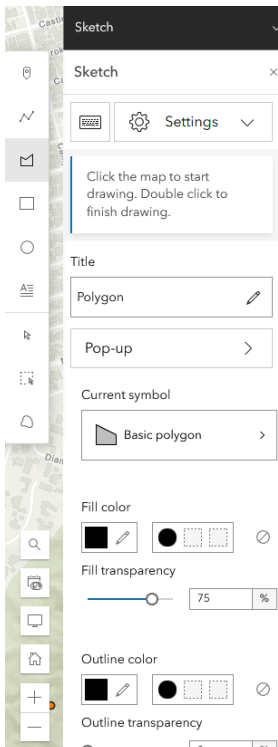


Figure 8 – Polygon Creation Menu



Figure 9 - Honolulu Zoo Polygon

Polygons can also be selected and have pop-ups enabled. Add details to the zoo like in Figure 10.

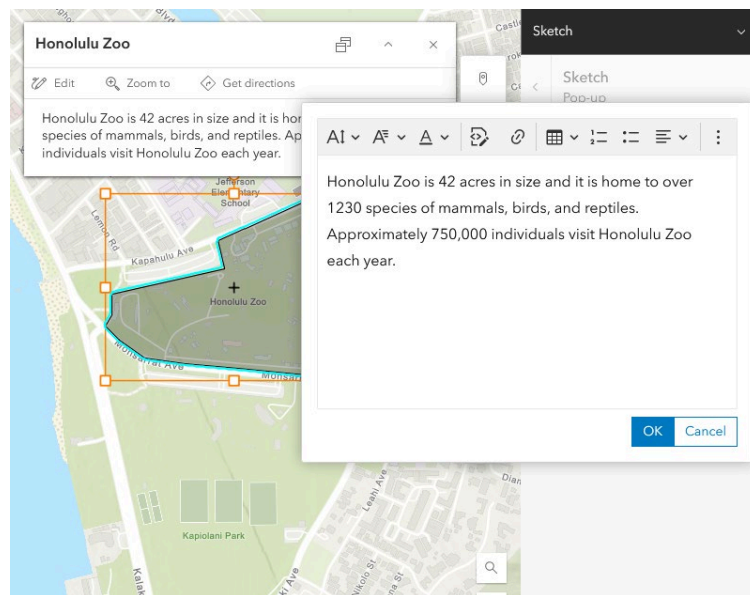


Figure 10 - Editing Pop-Up Description for Polygon

Next, you will add a path using a Line feature. As with polygons, lines can also be created point-by-point or drawn freehandedly. Choose one of these options and draw a path from the Kapiolani Community College (north of the zoo) to Ala Wai Golf Course (northeast of Diamond Head - you can draw the route any way you please, as long as you follow established roadways/pathways in Honolulu). Features can be named without creating a pop-up as well. Here, select the path and name it using the option above the pop-up menu (Figure 11).

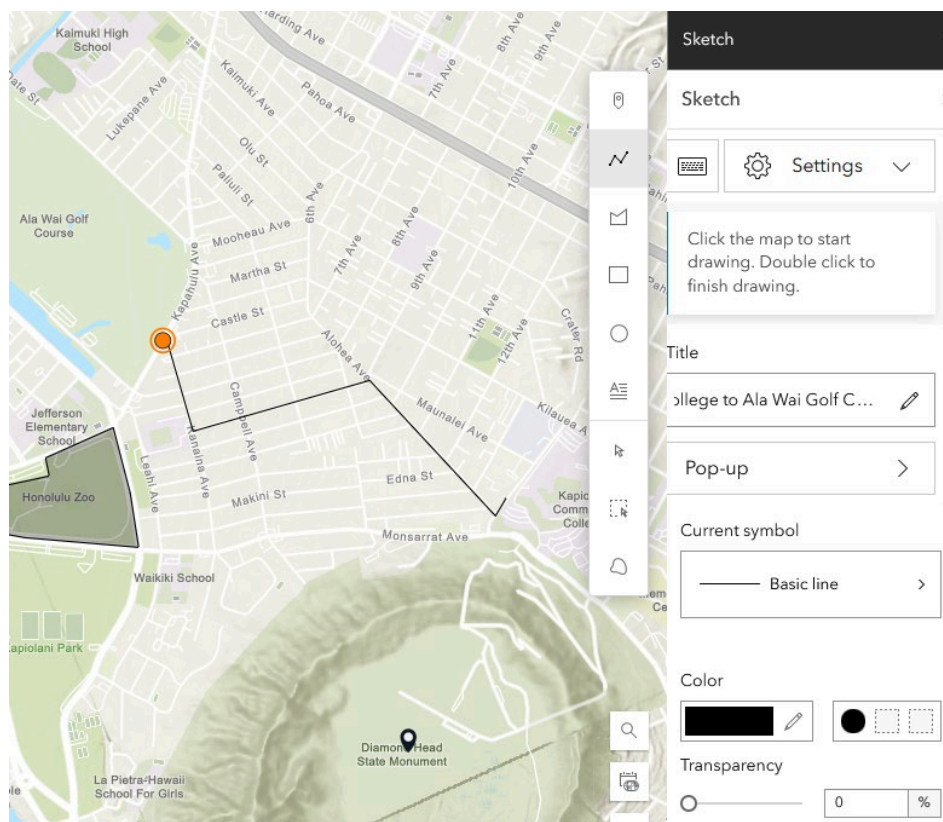


Figure 11 - Line Drawing from Kapiolani Community College to Ala Wai Golf Course

You can change the symbol or edit vertexes for any of the features you have created. Since the features you have created so far have a space for Name and Description, we will not cover the Text feature. However, if you simply wanted to add a Text note to your map, this method could be useful.

Adding Pre-existing Data

Using Sketch Layer, you created your own data layers inside the map. However, sometimes the data you need may already exist. ArcGIS Online has several ways of adding data to your map. The easiest way is to search for data from the Add menu by clicking on “**Add**” and choosing “**Browse Layers**” (Figure 12). Next select “**My Content**” dropdown menu and select “**ArcGIS Online**” (Figure 13). In the search box, type in “County Parks (Oahu)” and press Enter. Click the “+ Add” button of the first result (Figure 14).

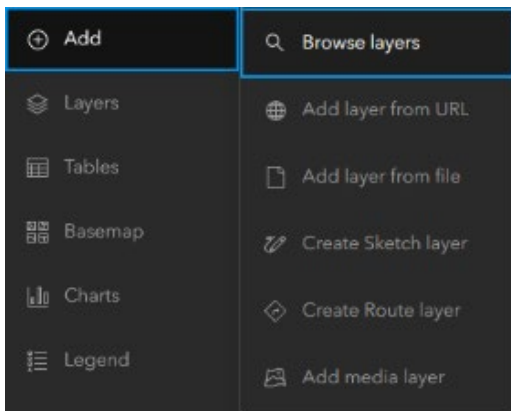


Figure 12 – Add Dropdown Menu – Browse Layers

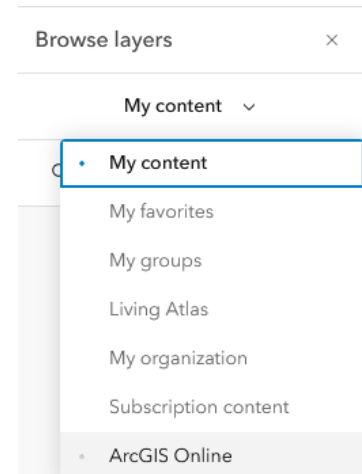


Figure 13 – My Content Dropdown Menu

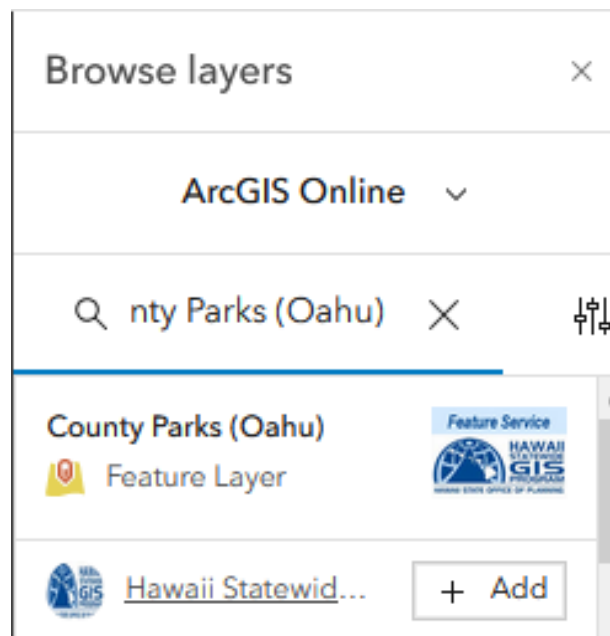


Figure 14 – Oahu County Parks Layer from ArcGIS Online

This new layer should be added to the Layers category on the left and several polygons should now populate the city. Next, we will explore the properties of this layer and change its appearance. To access the properties menu, find the layer in the left menu and click ... beside it. This will drop down several options. Click **“Show Properties”**. This will open a menu on the right similar to when creating sketches.

From here, find Symbology and select **“Edit Layer Style”**. A menu similar to Figure 15 should pop up. The first option allows us to change the appearance based on an attribute of the polygons, and the second lets us change the appearance uniformly. For now, we will choose the second option. This should now present a coloured box described as Symbol Style. Click this box and change the colour of the polygons. Figure 16 shows changing the colour of the parks to orange. The outline of the polygons as well as transparency are also able to be edited here.

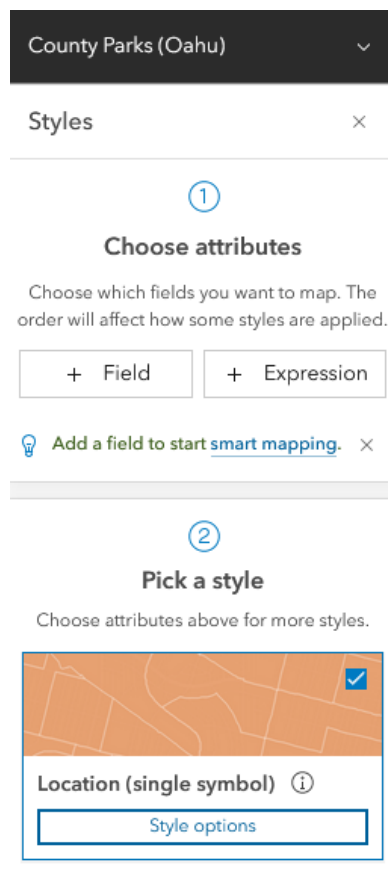


Figure 15 – Style Editing Options

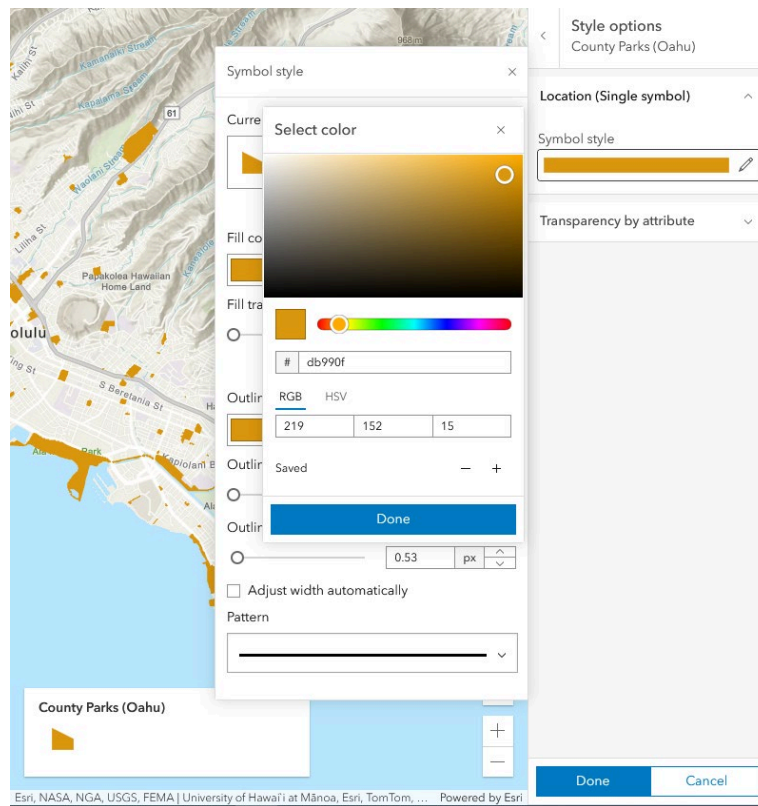


Figure 16 - Change Style Window

Another method for adding data is through a hosted web service. Click on the **“Add”** dropdown menu and choose **“Add layer from URL”**. In the dialog box, enter the following URL (Figure 17):

https://geodata.hawaii.gov/arcgis/rest/services/SoH_Imagery/Vivid_2022/ImageServer

You should then click Add to Map. This imagery service is provided by the State of Hawaii. Please note that sometimes copyright restrictions on imagery make it so that you can only view it up to a certain view level: once you have zoomed in too close, it will stop drawing.

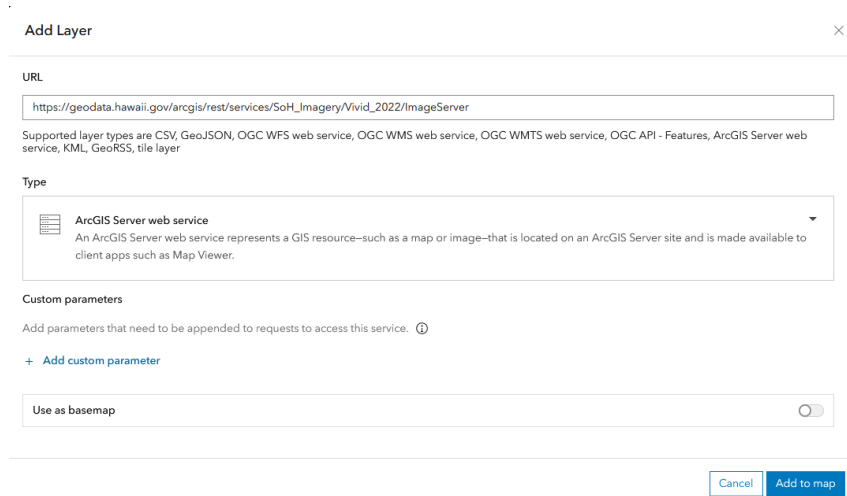


Figure 17- Add Layer from Web Window

The final method of adding data is to Add Layer from File, which uses your own locally stored data files. There are several file types you can upload: Esri Shapefiles (in zipped format); comma, semi- colon, or tab delimited text files (CSV or TXT); and GPS Exchange Format (GPX); each allows you to upload a maximum of 1000 features.

Uploading Data Files

For this section, we are going to utilize the City and County of Honolulu’s Open Data Catalogue, which features datasets available to the public for general use (see the Open Data City and County of Honolulu User License for details). To access the data, go to the following link:

<https://honolulu-cchnl.opendata.arcgis.com/>.

GeoJSON Files

We’re going to use GeoJSON files (.geojson), which is an open standard text format used to encode geographic data structures using Javascript, Object Notation (JSON). They support geometric types like points, lines, and polygons, and are widely used to display maps and location data on the web.

On the Honolulu Open Geospatial Data portal main page: <http://honolulu-cchnl.opendata.arcgis.com/>, scroll to the bottom of the page and select “**Parks and Recreation**” (Figure 18).

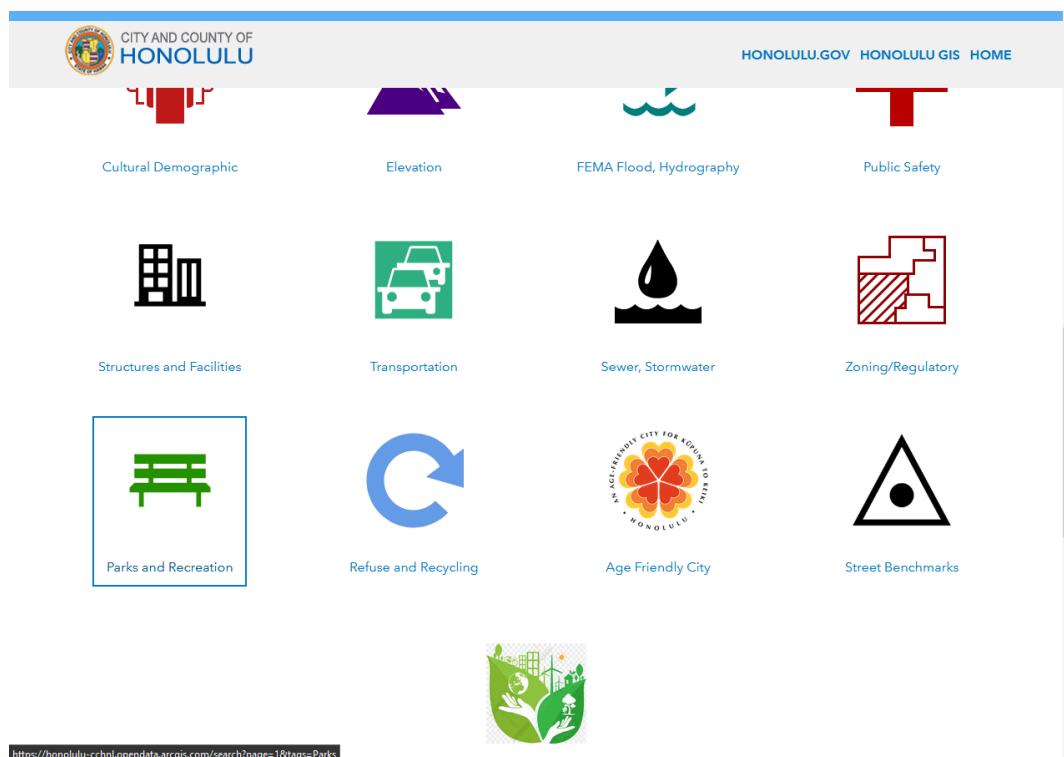


Figure 18 - Honolulu Open Geospatial Data Portal Main Page

Do a key word search for “**Streams**” and select the Streams – Intermittent Dataset (Figure 19).

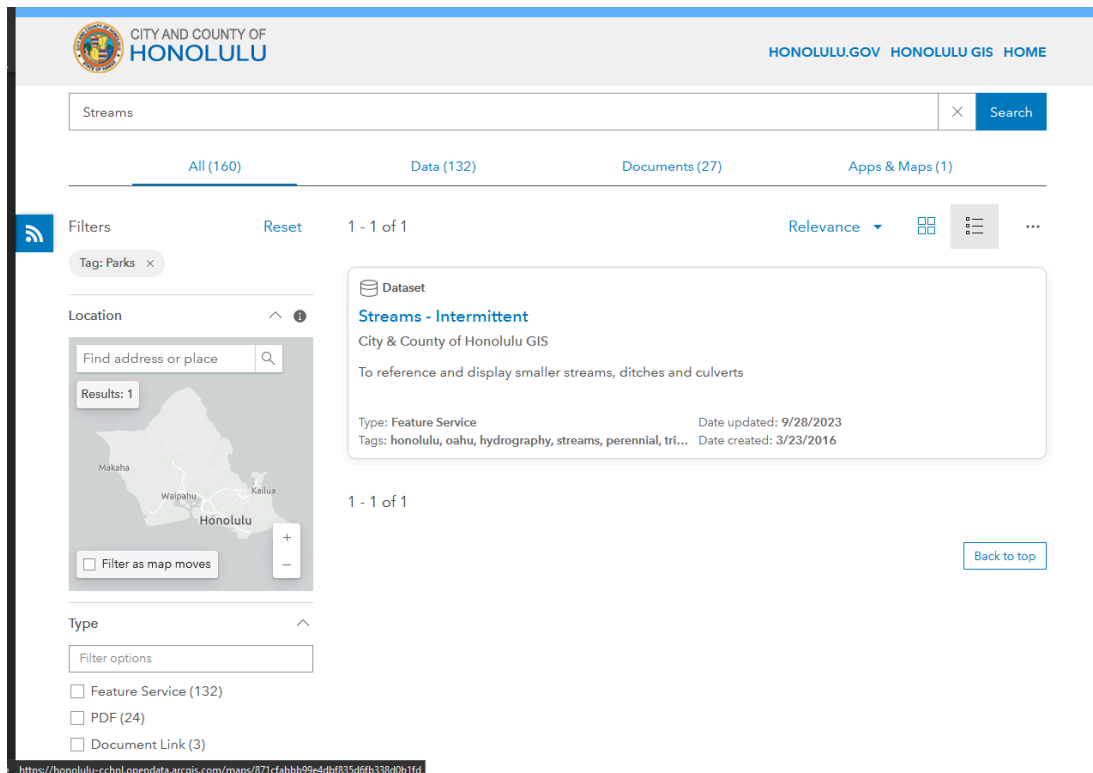


Figure 19 - Honolulu Open Geospatial Data Portal Results Page

Once the data page opens, you can preview the data. This page lets you preview the data on the map in spatial format and in tabular format by clicking on the Table icon (circled in Figure 20). For more information on the data itself, you can click View Full Details. For now, click on Download.

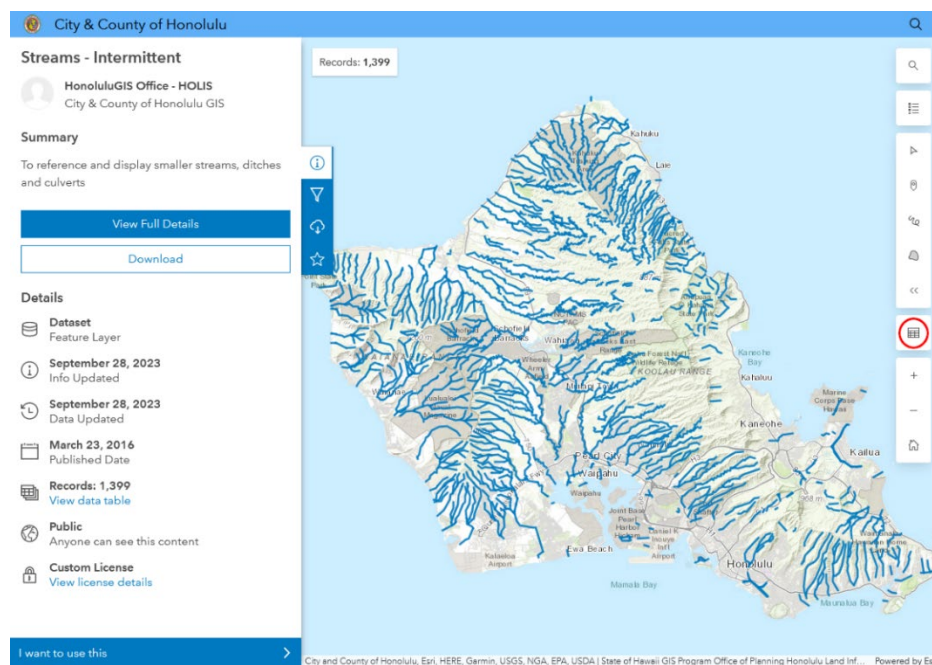


Figure 20 – Streams Preview Page

After clicking “**Download**”, a dropdown menu will show up on the left side of the page (Figure 21). This will give you

many options to save the data, such as CSV, KML, GeoJSON and Shapefile. To download the data specifically in GeoJSON format, click on the “**Download**” button under “**GeoJSON**”. This data includes information about streams and rivers across the island of Oahu.

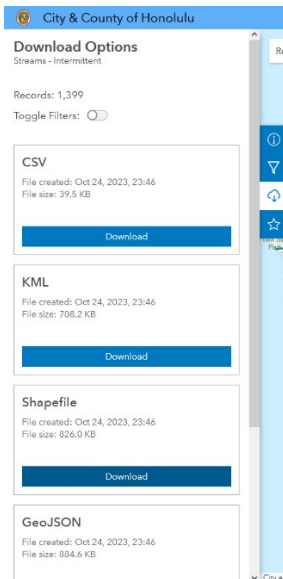


Figure 21 – Download as Shapefile

Go back to your map. From the Add menu, choose “**Add Layer from File**”. This will open a menu as seen in Figure 22, giving you the option to choose a file from your device as well as several cloud hosts. Select “Your Device” and choose the zip file you just downloaded. The newly imported layer has now been uploaded to Contents > My Contents as well as added to the map (you may need to zoom out or pan the map to see the features). You can click on a Stream feature to reveal a pop-up window with more information about it.

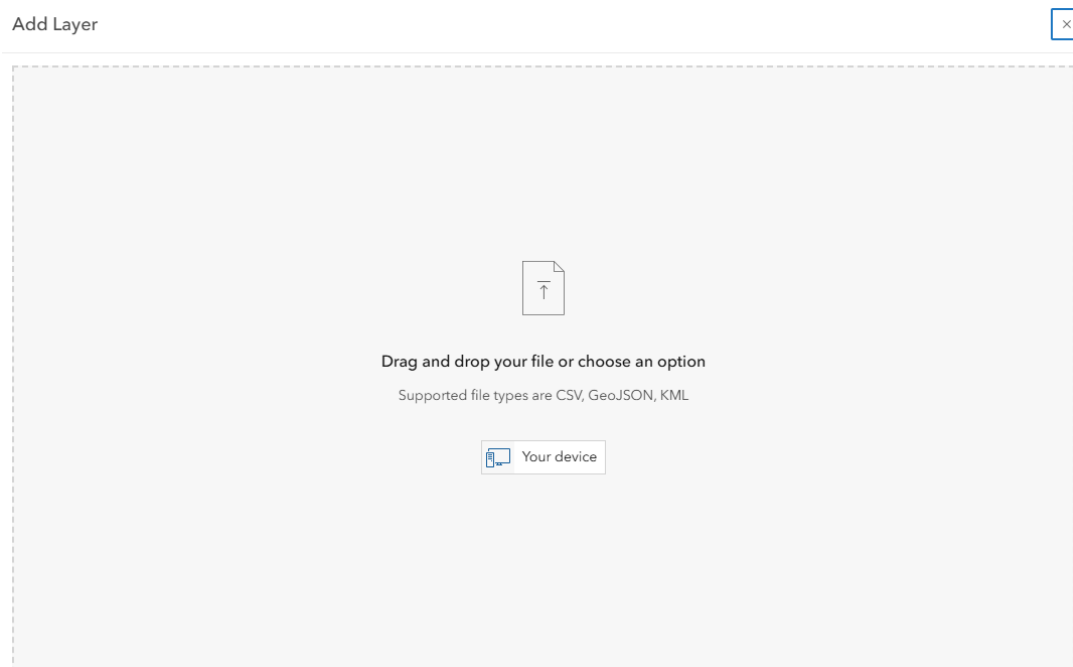


Figure 22 - Add Layer from File Window

Next, we will edit the style of the streams to be coloured based on attribute. From the layers menu, once again choose ... > Show Properties > Edit Layer Style, but this time select + Field. This will open up a selection of attributes the stream feature holds. Select **“trib_nam”**, the attribute describing the tributaries each stream belongs to. The map should be coloured similarly to Figure 23. The “Legend” option on the leftmost menu will show you what each colour represents.

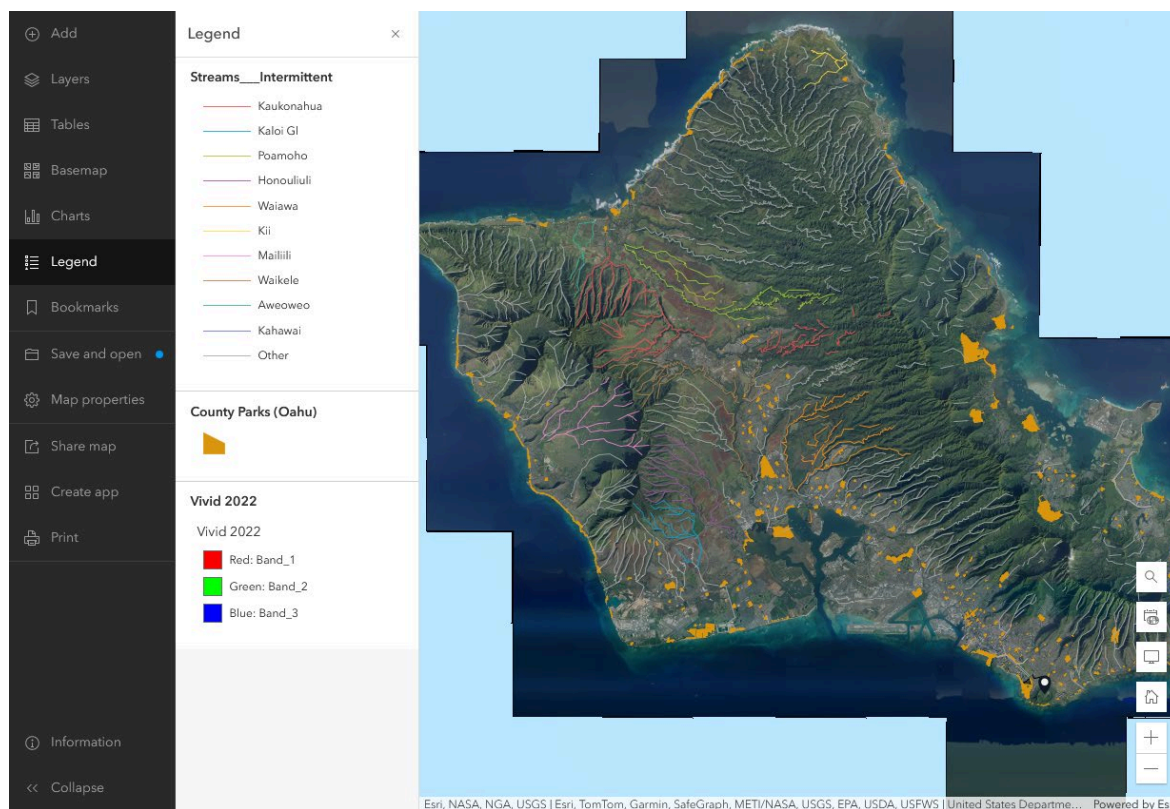


Figure 23 – Symbolized Tributaries

File Converters

As you have seen, there are a wide range of different file types. But sometimes the application you’re using, cannot use the type of file you’re trying to upload (e.g. Shapefile is no longer supported by the free ArcGIS Online version). And in cases like this you’re going to want to use an online file converter. On the internet, if you simply search up “Online Geodata converter”, you’ll be shown a website that can convert your geodata files into any other geodata file. Just simply upload the file you want and select the file format you want it converted to.

Tabular Data

As you may have noted while adding the ‘Regional Parks’ GeoJSON file, one of the options under import is importing data in CSV (Comma Separated Values) file format. When formatted correctly, CSV and TXT files provide tabular information that can be plotted by either physical address or geographic coordinates (i.e. latitude-longitude, or lat-long).

Once again, go to the Honolulu Open GeospatialDataCatalogue (<https://honolulu-cchnl.opendata.arcgis.com/>) and search

for the “Electric Vehicle Charging Station (EVCS)” layer (Figure 24). Click on it. Make sure the file type is set to CSV and download the file. CSVs can be imported the same as GeoJSONs, however with tabular data you will need to define the latitude and longitude attributes. In this case, those values are `y_coord` and `x_coord` respectively.

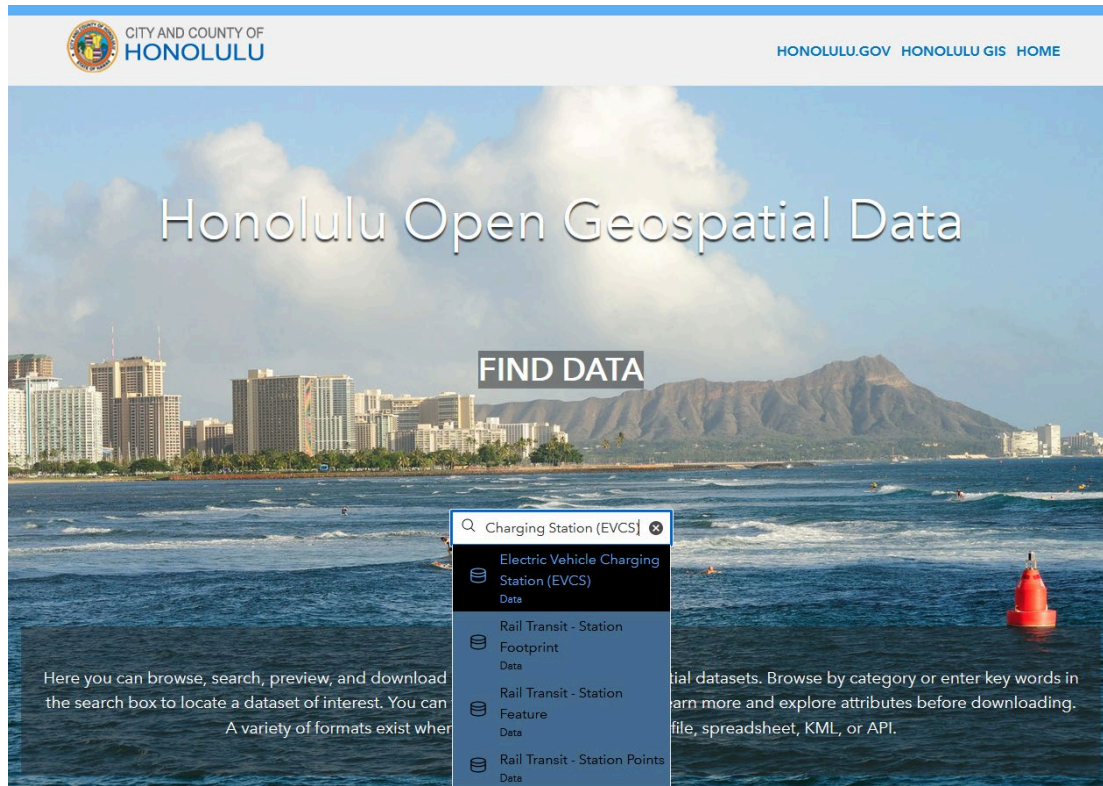


Figure 24 – Honolulu Open Geospatial Data Portal Main Page (2)

After the CSV file has been imported, your map will look like Figure 25. The Change Style pane is automatically generated on the right side of the page. Each coloured dot represents a charging station located in Honolulu. You may change the feature, such as Symbol (color, fill, and outline), Transparency, and Visible Range, by clicking on “**Style Options**” in the Location (Single symbol) tab.

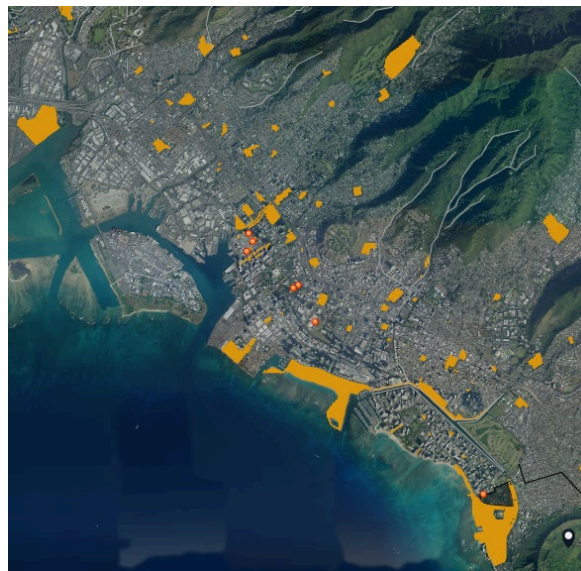


Figure 25 – CSV Data on Map as Points

KML Files

Although not mentioned in the Add Layer from File dialog, KML (Keyhole Markup Language) files can be added to your maps from Content (ArcGIS Online). Google created this file format and used it in their popular Google Earth Pro application. The City and County of Honolulu’s Open Data Catalogue offers their data in KML format.

From the City and County of Honolulu’s Open Data Catalogue (<http://honolulu-ccnhl.opendata.arcgis.com>), search “**Existing Bike Facilities**” and download the dataset as a KML file. From your map window, click the ☰ icon in the top-left corner and choose Content (Figure 26). This page contains all the items you have created in ArcGIS Online.

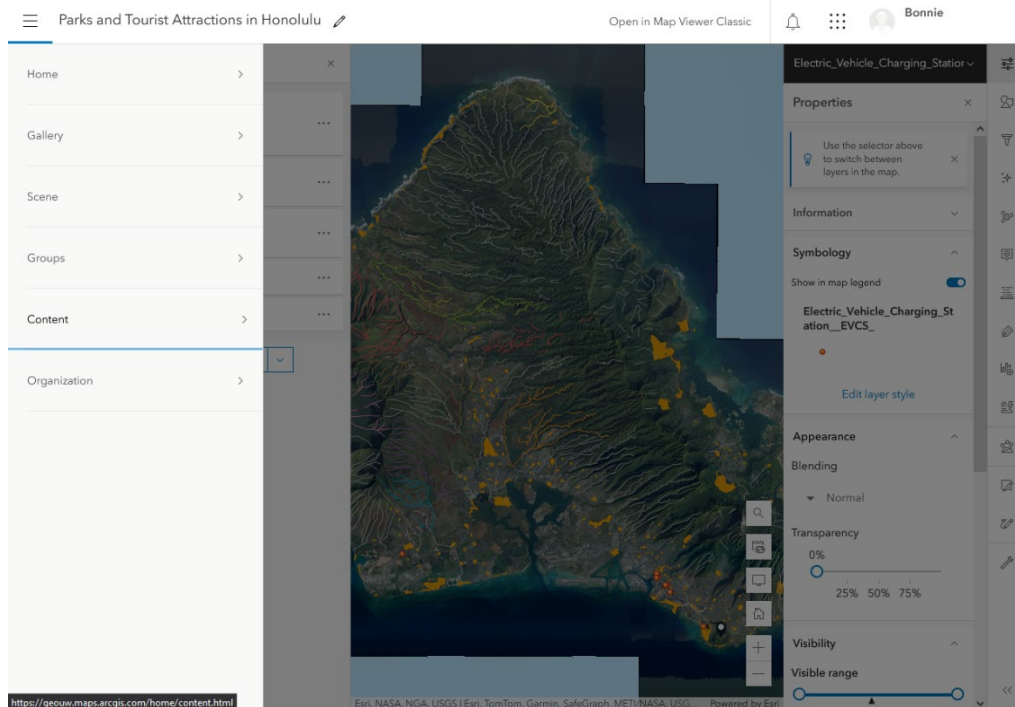


Figure 26 – ArcGIS Online Content Page

Click on “+ **New Item**” (Figure 27) and browse “**Your device**” for the Existing_Bike_Facilities.kml file you just downloaded. The menu will be identical to the one found in Figure 22.

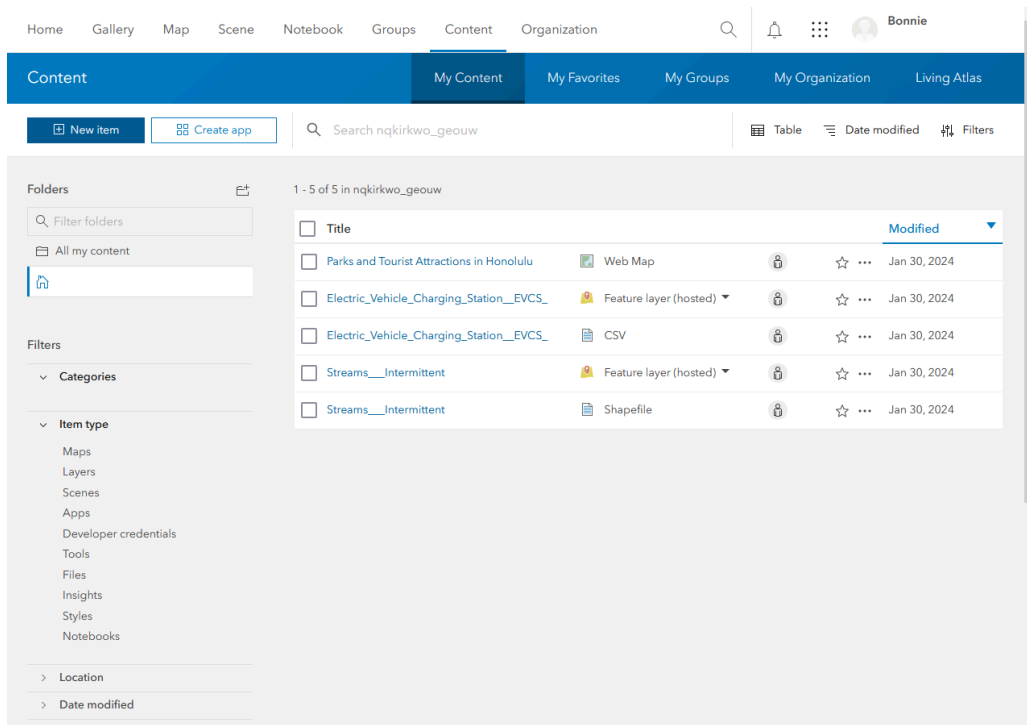


Figure 27 – ArcGIS Online Content Page

The New item dialog box that pops up gives the option to add Tags, which helps your item get found in searches. Type the words “Honolulu” and “Bikes” as two separate entries and click “Save” (Figure 27).

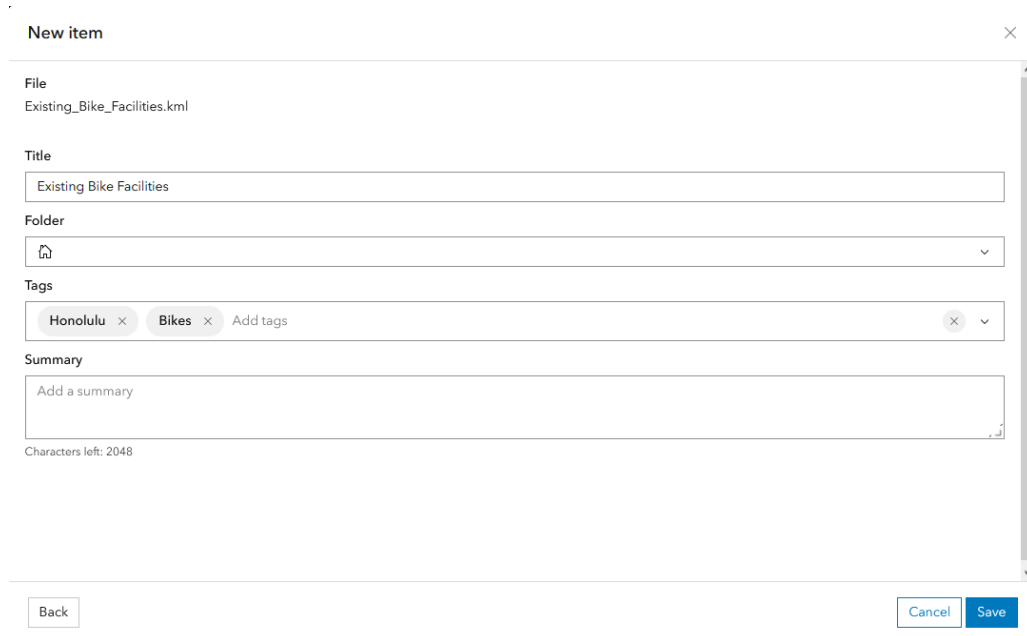


Figure 28 – New Item Description Pop-up Window

Once the KML has finished uploading, the item description page will appear showing the details of your newly added layer (Figure 29). This page can be reached at any time by clicking the item on the My Content page.

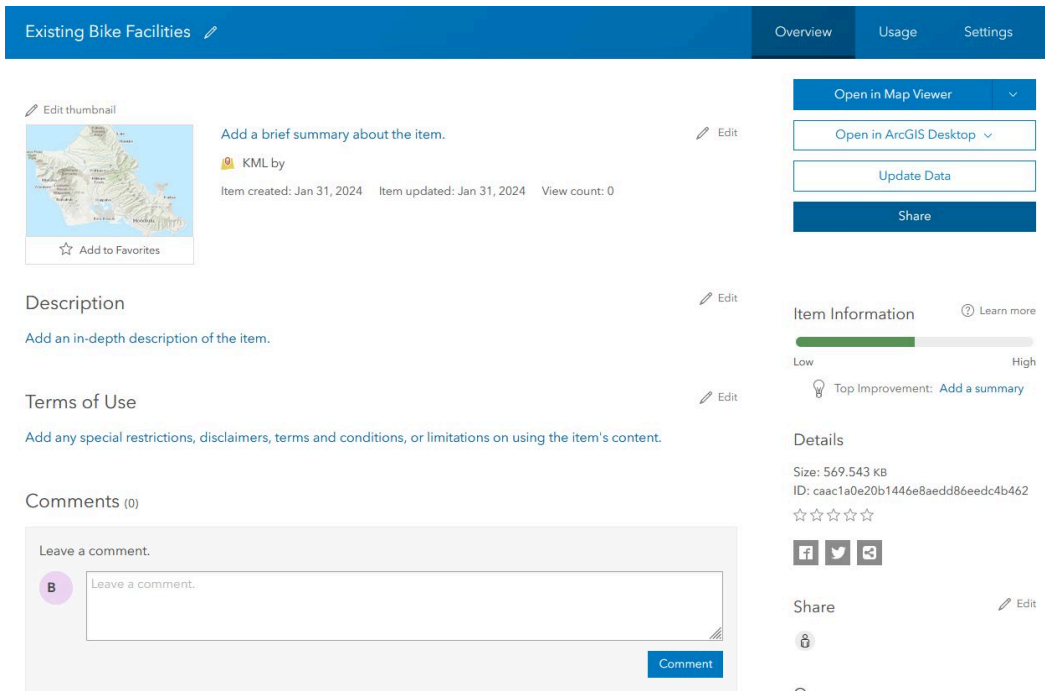


Figure 29 - Layer Description Page

Though not necessary now, from this page we can change the level of access via the “**Share**” button on the right. Figure 30 shows different options of how the data can be shared. If you want others to view the data, select Everyone (public).

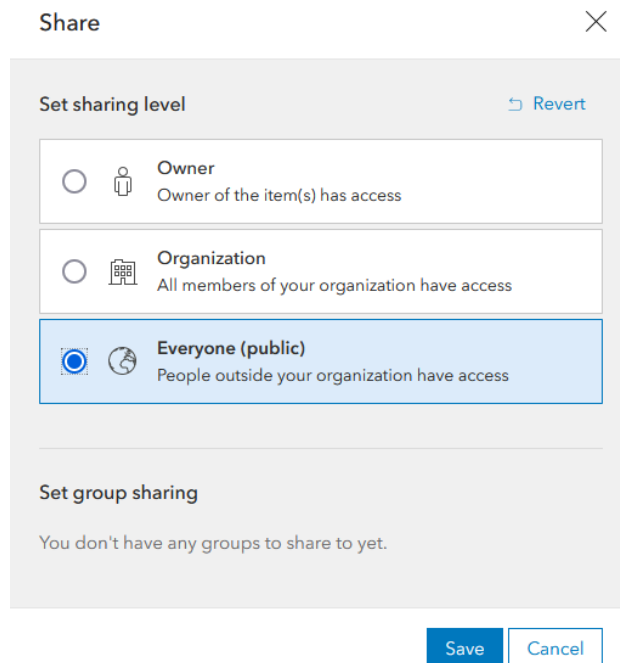


Figure 30 - Share Option Pop-up Window

Go back to the Map Viewer page where the new KML layer will appear in Add > Browse Layers > My Content.

Editing and viewing attribute information

Uncheck all the layers except for ‘Electric Vehicle Charging Stations’. Your goal is to add 2-3 charging stations to the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations layer.

In the Change Style section, select **“Location (Single symbol)”** under ‘Select a drawing style’ (Figure 31).

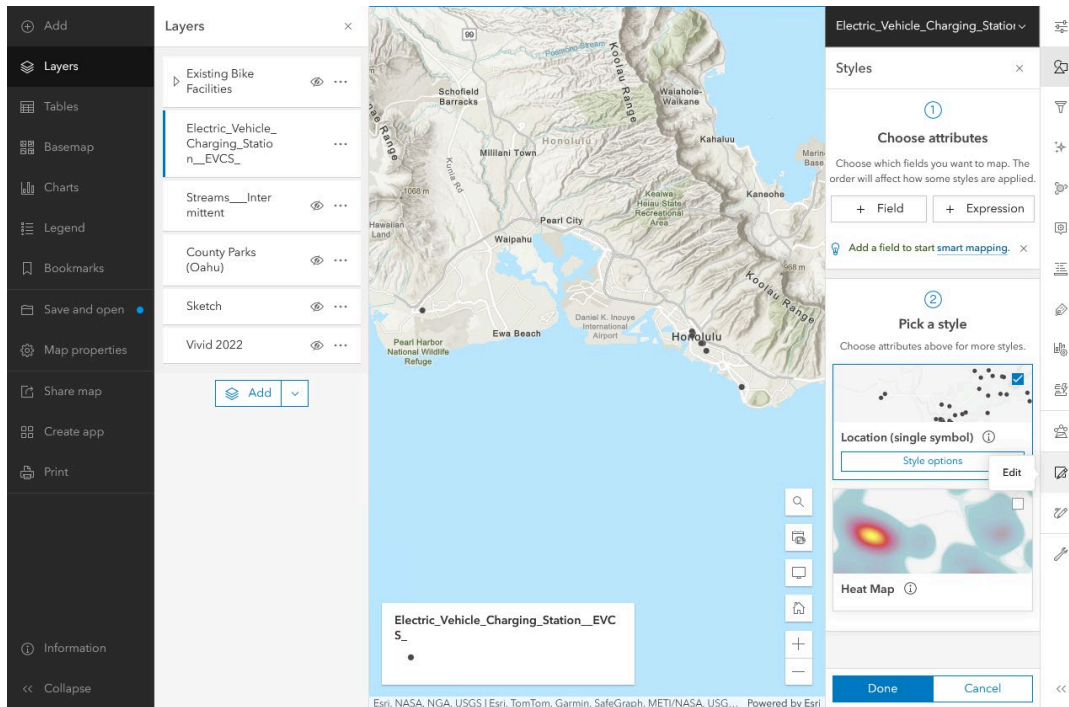


Figure 31 – Map with Change Style Pane

Then select the **“Edit”** button on the bottom right (depicting a pencil and a box) to start adding charging stations to your file. Click on **“New Feature”** (Figure 32). Then, select charging station points to the parking lots at Aloha Stadium and Diamond Head or any other landmark.

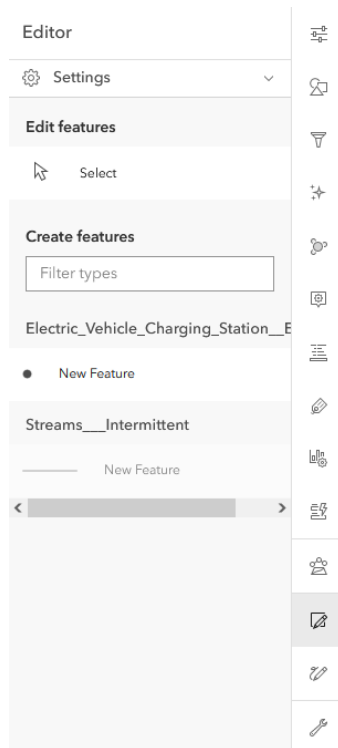


Figure 32 – Edit Features Pane

Once you have chosen a landmark, click on it to place your point and fill in the following: Label the **Name** as the particular landmark and the **Location** as the name of the neighbourhood. In practice, the rest would also be filled in, but they can be left blank for this demonstration (Figure 33).

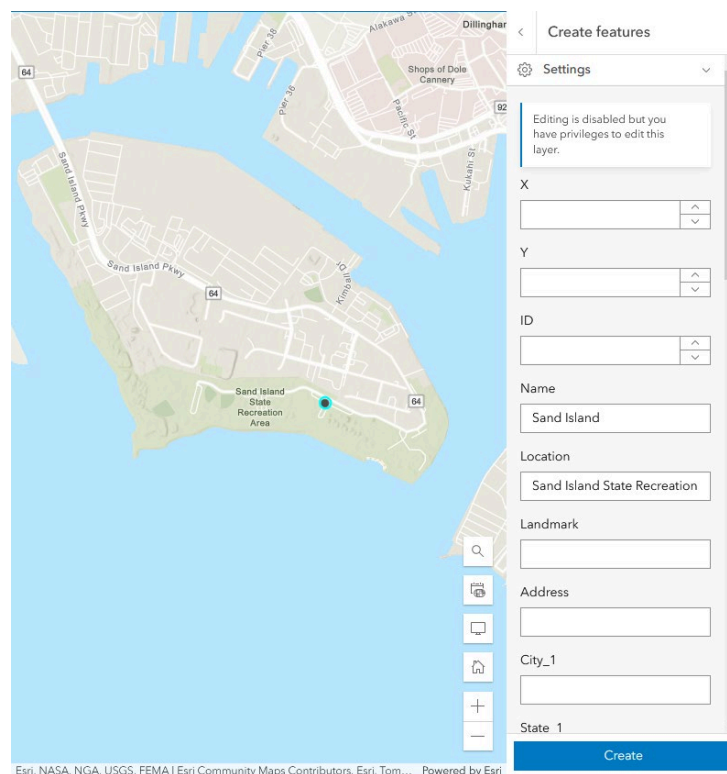


Figure 33 – Feature Description Pop-up Window

Lastly, rename the layer into “Charging Stations” by clicking the three dots beside the layer name in the Layers pane (Figure 34, same as how you opened the layer properties). This time, select “**Rename**”. Enter “Charging Stations” in the pop-up window and click “**OK**” (Figure 35).

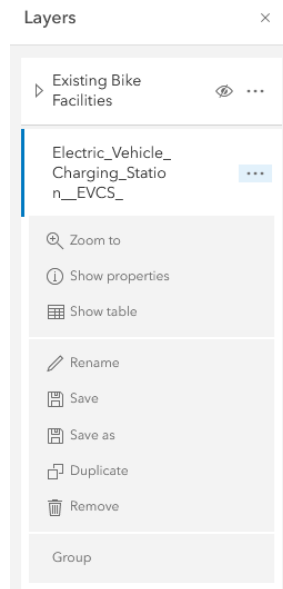


Figure 34 – Layer Options

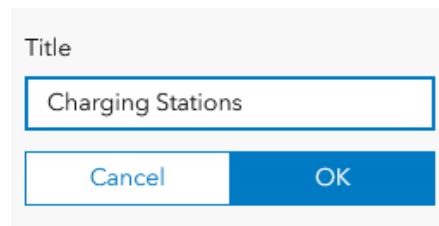


Figure 35 – Renaming

Customizing Your Layers

Under the Contents tab of your map’s Details, you should now see a number of different layers and a base map (Topographic). You will also notice that to the right of each item has 3 blue dots. Clicking the blue dots reveal a dropdown menu showing the various actions you can perform on a given layer. Options will vary by layer.

Let’s use some of the menu options to tidy things up a bit. First, Rename the layer “Vivid 2022” to “Oahu Aerial 2022”. Finally, open its Properties and change the Transparency of the ‘Oahu Aerial 2016’ layer to 50% (Figure 36).

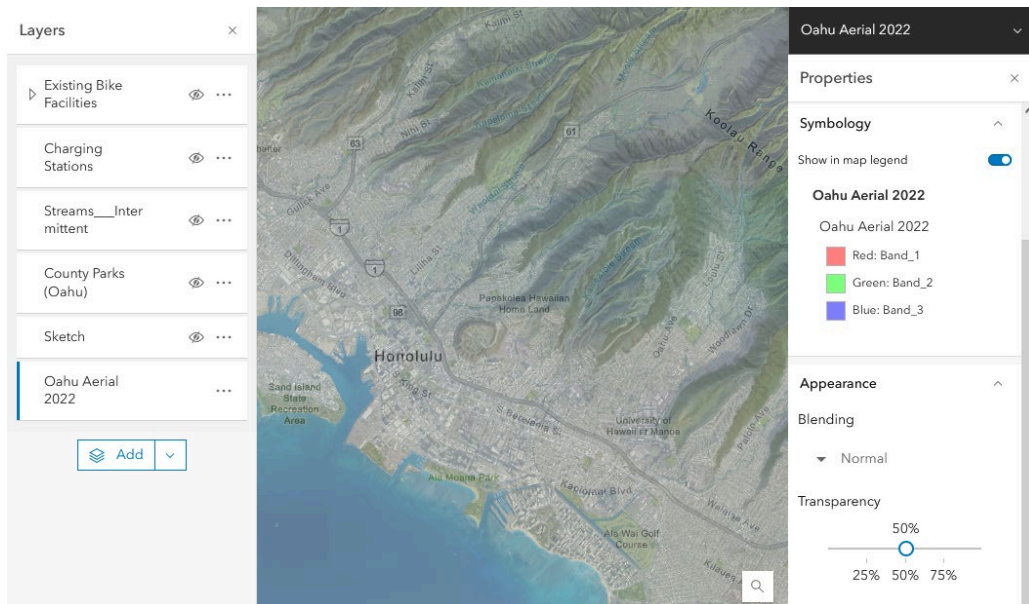


Figure 36 – Transparency Pop-up with Map

One last customization you'll perform is Set Visibility Range. This allows you to control which layers are visible at various zoom levels. Since the aerial imagery is of little use when zoomed out too far to see much detail, we'll set the visibility range so it doesn't show past a certain extent. In the Properties menu, scroll down below transparency to find Visibility. Change the dropdown on the left for in closer than: to 1:40,000 (Town). Figures 37 and 38 show the difference of a layer being out of and within range. Notice how much easier it is to read the map at this scale when the aerals are hidden from view.

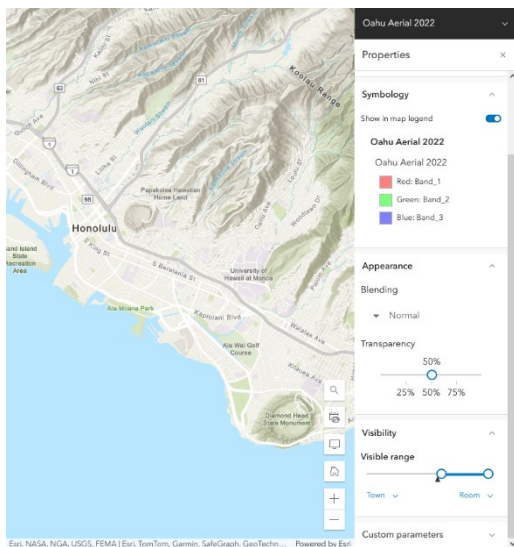


Figure 37 – Outside Visible Range

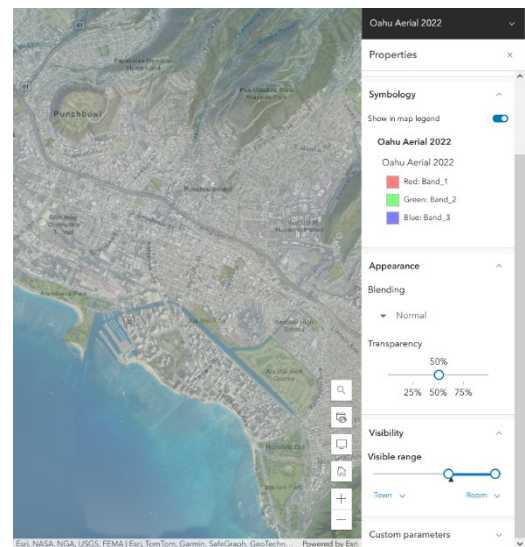


Figure 38 – Within Visible Range

Note: ArcGIS Online also has tools that can be used to Perform Analysis on the data you add or create. This functionality is only available on layers where editing has been enabled. Where editing has been disabled, Perform Analysis will not be an option in the dropdown menu. However, you can still customize the pop-up information on such layers by using the Configure Pop-up option in the menu. A brief overview of the types of analysis you can perform are included at the end as an optional addendum.

Accessing the Attribute Table

Behind each piece of spatial data there is tabular information. Often times, this information can be very useful to determine the usefulness of an ambiguous dataset or give insight to what types of analysis is possible. For example, a set of address points may also contain information about the type of building it is.

The attribute table can be selected in the same ... dropdown as Properties or Renaming, under “Show Table” (Figure 39).

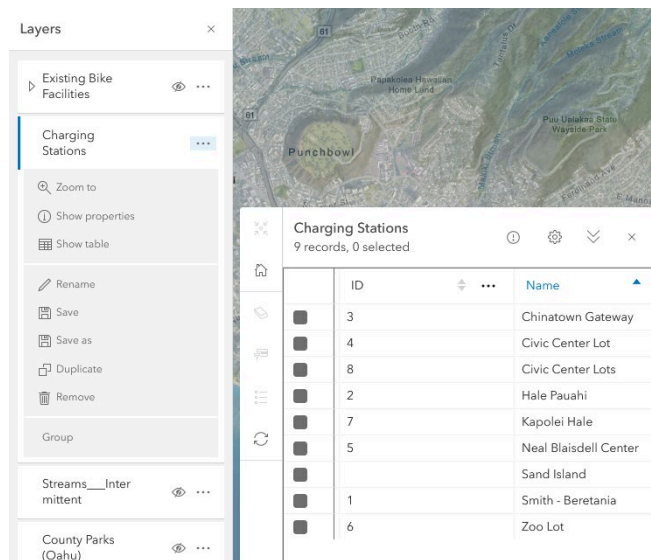


Figure 39 – Attribute Table

You can sort the table based on different columns by clicking the arrows to the right of the attribute. Figure 39 shows the Chargin Stations sorted by Name instead of ID. Clicking it once sorts it descending, clicking it again reverses it to sort ascending, and clicking it a third time resets the sort.

Sharing Your Map

Up to this point, your map has been saved to your free ArcGIS Online public account. However, since only you have access to this account, you'll need to share your map for others to see it. Sharing a map can be done from many different places on the site as well as in many ways.

You can share directly from the map by saving the most current changes and then clicking “Share Map”. You can also share your map from the “My Content” page or the Web Map Details page. After selecting to share with Everyone (Public), the link to your map will be accessible to anyone.

Web Maps can also be embedded into websites directly; however it requires you to view the map in the older Classic Map Viewer. To do this, click Open in Map Viewer Classic in your map view, click Share, then “Embed in Website” (map needs to be public for this option to be accessible. From here you can create an HTML code you can copy into another website (Figure 40).

Embed in Website

Choose the size of your map. ⓘ

W 500 X H 400 ☒ Allow responsive sizing

Copy and paste HTML to embed in website.

<style> embed-container (position: relative; padding-bottom: 80%; height: 0; max-width: 100%;) embed-container frame, embed-container of COPY

Map Options Add Symbol

Choose options to display on your map.

☒ Zoom Control ☒ Scale Bar

☐ Home Button ☐ Location Search

☐ Basemap Selector ☐ Map Details

☐ View larger map ☐ Legend

☒ Disable scroll zoom ☐ Preview image

Choose your theme.

☒ Light ☐ Dark

Map Preview

BACK DONE

Figure 40 - Embed in Website Options

The option to make a Web Application is slightly more involved, but still relatively easy to set up. To do this, open the map's details page via “My Content”. The option to Create Web App is on the right side (Figure 41).

Open in Map Viewer

Open in ArcGIS Desktop

Open in Field Maps Designer

Create Web App

Instant Apps
Choose an app to provide a focused experience using your map.

Experience Builder
Use a template or start from scratch to create the exact web experience you want.

ArcGIS Storymaps
Tell a story by combining maps with narrative text and media.

Dashboards
Create a dashboard with data visualizations that provide key insights.

Web AppBuilder
Create an app by selecting a theme and choosing from a library of widgets.

Configurable Apps →
Create an app by selecting a focused template and configuring its properties.

Figure 41 – Web Map Description Page

Here we will be selecting to create a Configurable App. This option should open a dialog box, which features numerous templates for publishing your map as a web application. Click on the thumbnail images and it will give you a brief description of how each template is used.

For this map, we will use the Basic Viewer template as a way to share our web map outside of the ArcGIS Online viewer where we created it. Enter the information for your web application as seen below (Figure 42), and then click Done.

Create a web app

Specify a title, tags, and summary for the new web app.

Title:
Parks and Tourist Attractions in Honolulu

Tags:
Honolulu X Hawaii X Oahu X Tourism X Parks X
Add tags

Summary: (Optional)
Enter a summary

Save in folder:
▼

< Back Done Cancel

Figure 42 - Create a New Web App Pop-Up Page

At this point, some important information appears on the screen. Both the web map and the web application are shared. Afterwards, a page like Figure 43 should appear.

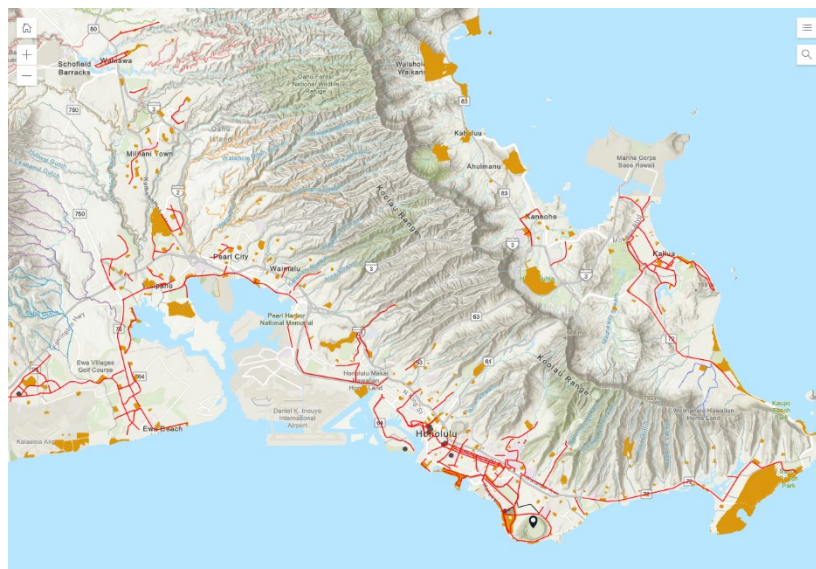


Figure 43 - Web App View of City of Honolulu

To customize the appearance, metadata, and interactivity of the map, go to the details page for the newly created web app and click Configure (Figure 44). This will take you to a new configuration page (Figure 45) that will let you change settings for the Web App that appears in Figure 43.

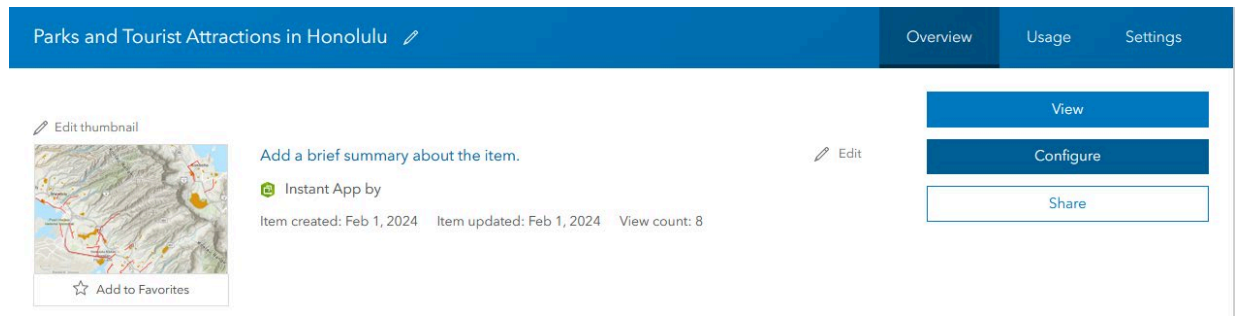


Figure 44 – Web App Details Page

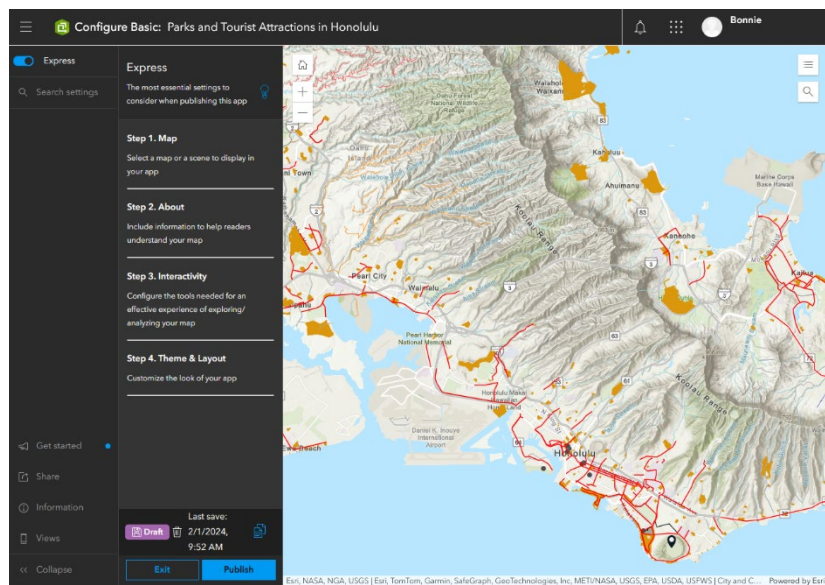


Figure 45 – Web App Configuration Page

Wrapping Up

ArcGIS Online provides an easy way for users to create and share maps. When compared with an organizational account, the free public account has some limitations. For example, you cannot upload image files to your 'My Content' folder with a public account, but this functionality is possible with an organizational one. Even with the public account, you probably would have noticed that there are many other features of this mapping platform that were not covered in this guide. However, this introduction should give you the foundation for continuing to explore the options on your own.

Much of how and what you learn will be by trial-and-error—even with this guide. So, take the time to discover the different tools, templates, data, and displays. See how geospatial data can enhance your digital information and make data more meaningful by adding the geographic element!

Reference

Images from <http://www.arcgis.com>

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<https://uwaterloo.ca/library/geospatial/>

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Optional: Organizational Accounts and Service Credits

If you created a personal account for the purpose of this tutorial, then it is likely a free account. The true power of ArcGIS Online becomes apparent in the paid versions made available through your organization or institution. Consult your GIS department, IT department, or mapping help desk about getting set up with credentials and permissions that would give you the ability to do the mapping and analysis that you need.

You may need to specify to your aiding technician what permissions and roles you might need. Use this key to figure out what user role and permissions are right for you.

- Viewer – Viewers cannot create, edit, analyze, or distribute data available on an organization’s account, but are able to see it. This is typically what role you will need should you require secure access to data but are not affiliated with the organization.
- Editor – Editors have access to the data and editing functions on data. However, this does not extend to the Editor the ability to create datasets, perform analysis, or share their work (or any work they were given access to). This role is useful for persons assigned with maintenance of already existing datasets.
- Creator – Creators can access and edit data, as well as create new datasets, share data (ex. Export to website, change ArcGIS Online permissions to who can view data, etc.), and perform analysis. This role is useful for people who are members of a project and are developing new data and products.
- GIS Professional – The GIS Professional role has the same abilities as a Creator, but also has access to ArcGIS Pro (the desktop client meant to pair with ArcGIS Online).

Other user types exist, such as Field Editor and Insight Analyst. These user roles are specific to other ESRI applications and are outside the scope of this tutorial.

Also note that these roles and permissions are set by default. Your aiding technician may be able to add custom permissions to your role based on the needs of your project. Discussing your project needs with the technician is the best way to determine the user role and permissions that are best for you.

Service Credits (credits, for short) are ESRI’s method of quantifying and monetizing ArcGIS Online’s hosting and geoprocessing power. Certain intensive operations, such as geocoding, require credits, which are purchased and pooled for use. Furthermore, hosting layers on ESRI’s AGOL servers will incur credit costs once a threshold of memory is passed. It is wise to ask your aiding technician about your organization’s credit pool and to plan ahead to ensure that your project does not exceed the resources available to your organization.