

# The Innovator's Sandbox: A Civic Blueprint for AI

Safely modernizing citizen services  
from curiosity to coalition.

Northwest Managers Conference • AI Governance & Responsible Use



~ OFFICIAL CYBER SEAL

WELCOME TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE HOMEPAGE EXPERIENCE

# Muni.org GeoCities Edition

Anchorage, Alaska: now with 1,000% more neon, bevels, marquees, and web magic

Unofficial retro tribute mockup inspired by the current Muni.org home page

VISITORS TO THIS CYBERPAGE

000008

11:38:32 PM

★ Next Regular Municipal Election: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 ★ Snow Removal ★ Report a Pothole ★ Job Opportunities ★ Public Notice Calendar

## QUICK NAVIGATION PORTAL

Real Muni.org Home

Mayor

Assembly

Fire Department

Anchorage Police

Solid Waste Services

Parks & Recreation

Library

AWWU

GIS / Maps

## TOP REQUESTS TURBO LAUNCHPAD

Big shiny buttons inspired by the live homepage

2026 Bond Package

Port of Alaska Modernization

Snow Removal

Help Turn the Tide on Homelessness

Report a Pothole

Report Trash

Job Opportunities

Elections Information

Open Real Muni.org

## COOL OFFICIAL BUTTONS



Anchorage Police Department



Adopt a Pet

# Mount Edgecumbe Erupts - April Fools' 1974

[Home](#) / [Porky's Prank](#)

## The History: Sitka's 1974 Mount Edgecumbe Volcano Hoax

Residents of Sitka, Alaska were alarmed when the long-dormant volcano neighboring them, Mount Edgecumbe, suddenly began to belch out billows of black smoke. People spilled out of their homes onto the streets to gaze up at the volcano, terrified that it was active again and might soon erupt. (Today, you can safely explore the crater's edge via local [Sitka outdoor adventures](#)). Luckily it turned out that man, not nature, was responsible for the smoke. A local practical joker named Porky Bickar had flown hundreds of old tires into the volcano's crater and then lit them on fire, all in a (successful) attempt to fool the city dwellers into believing that the volcano was stirring to life. According to local legend, when Mount St. Helens erupted six years later, a Sitka resident wrote to Bickar to tell him, "This time you've gone too far!" Read the rest of the story below...



## The Logistics: 70 Tires, a Helicopter, and 50-Foot Letters

Source: [Sitka Sound Records](#)

On Kruzof Island, about 13 miles west of Sitka, Alaska, sits Mt Edgecumbe. The extinct volcano is 3,200 feet in height and covered with snow about eight months of the year.

On April 1, 1974, a clear, beautiful morning, Porky Oliver Bickar of Sitka woke up early to see Mt. Edgecumbe through the window in all its glory. Porky whispered to his wife, Patty: "This is it. We've gotta do it today." Patty smiled sweetly, kissed Porky on the forehead, and said, "Don't make an ass of yourself."

# We've Seen This Movie Before: The Productivity Paradox

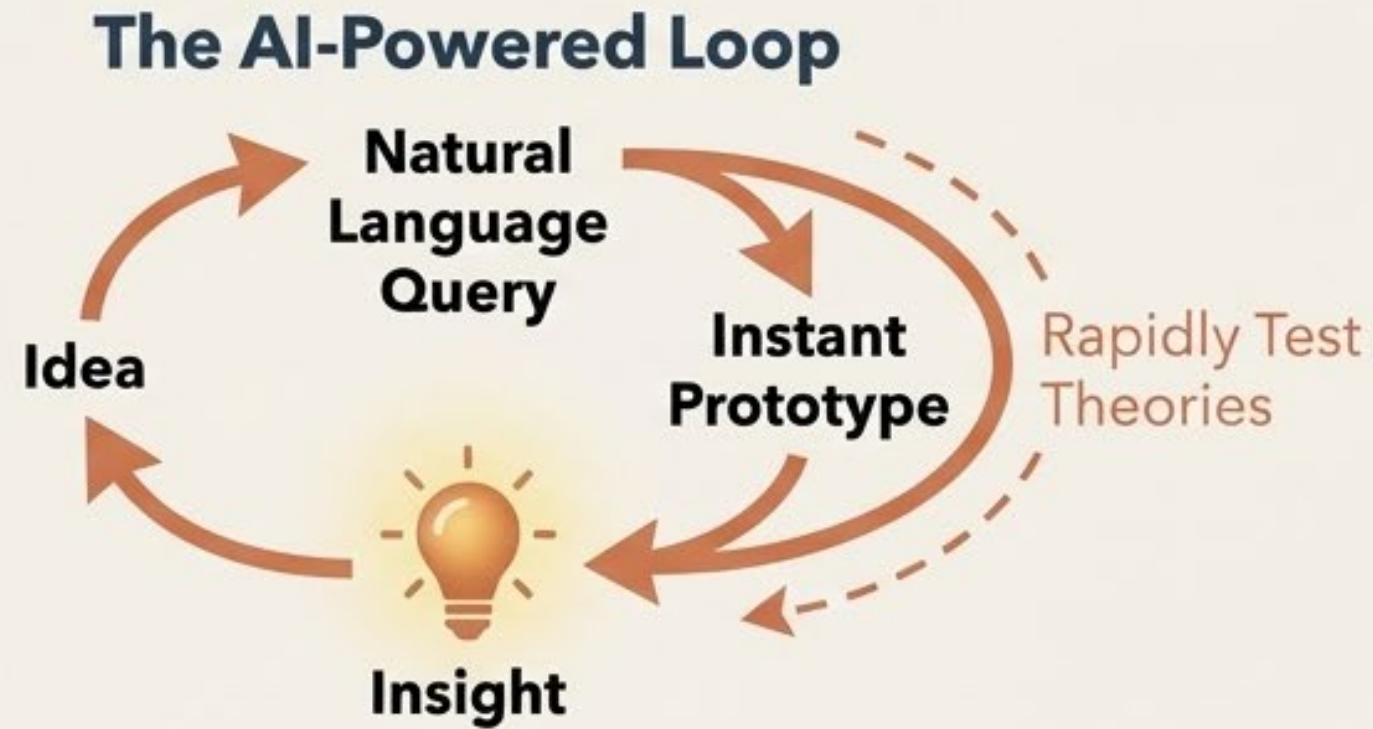
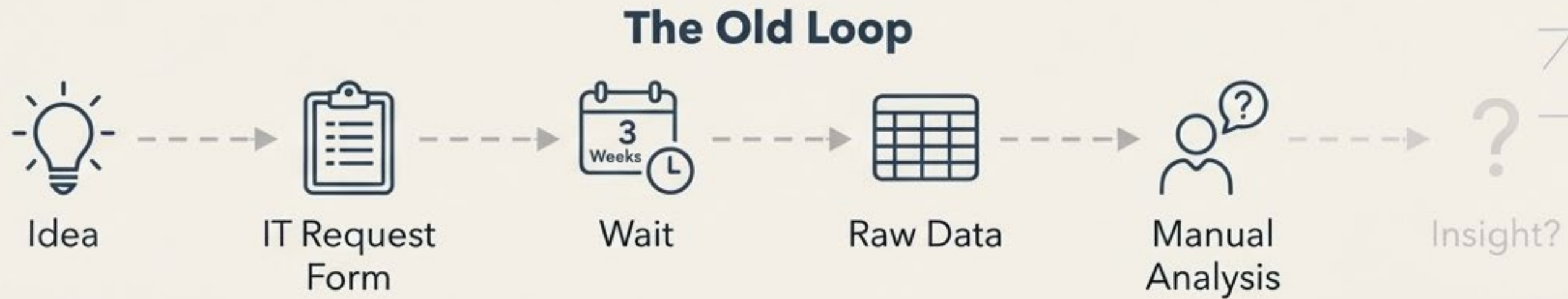


**1980s: The Computer Age Arrives.** Economist Robert Solow noted that computers were everywhere *except* in the productivity statistics. Why? *We spent more time learning the tool* (DOS commands, floppy disks) than doing the work.



**Today: The AI Age.** We are currently in the “DOS phase” of AI. The goal isn't just to learn the tool, but to *fundamentally change the speed of our work.*

# The New Speed of an Idea: From Weeks to Minutes



AI collapses the time between a question and an answer, allowing local government to innovate at the speed of curiosity.

# Why Local Government is the Ideal AI Proving Ground

## Lock and Key

### THE LOCKS

### THE KEYS



We hold massive amounts of unstructured open data and public policies.



Data is the exact fuel Large Language Models (LLMs) need to thrive.



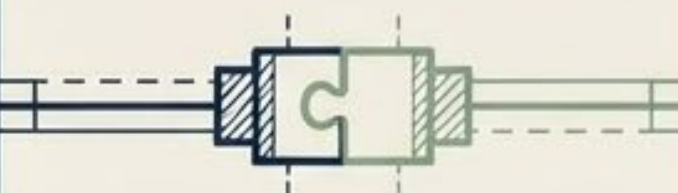
We use technical terms and complex procedures.



AI is built for summarization, synthesis, and translating jargon into plain language.



We have a culture of helping.



If an AI workflow works in one city, it can be instantly shared and deployed in another.



# Pillar 1: Unlocking Our Institutional Knowledge



## INSTANTLY SEARCHABLE ARCHIVES

Digitize and OCR decades of paper forms and PDFs, making every word instantly searchable.



## DEEP POLICY RESEARCH

Quickly analyze how other cities have tackled similar zoning or public works challenges.



## UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN CODE

Use natural language to query your municipal code and model the impact of legislative changes.

## What birds have been seen in Sitka, but not Juneau or Anchorage Alaska in the last 24 hours

Let me pull recent observations from all three areas in the last 24 hours.

Used ebird-api integration >

Now let me compute the diff. Here are the species seen in each location:

**Sitka (19 species):** Varied Thrush, Pine Siskin, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Mallard, Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Glaucous-winged Gull, Bald Eagle, American Crow, Common Raven, Pacific Wren, American Robin, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser

**Juneau (23 species) and Anchorage (26 species)** combined give a pool of species to subtract.

Here are the species reported in Sitka today that were **not** reported in either Juneau or Anchorage:

1. **Harlequin Duck** — 11 at Halibut Point SRS
2. **Surf Scoter** — 11 at Halibut Point SRS
3. **Fox Sparrow** — 1 at The Garden Perch feeding station
4. **Pacific Wren** — 3 at Halibut Point SRS

All four are perfectly reasonable for coastal Sitka at this time of year — Harlequin Ducks and Surf Scoters love the rocky shoreline habitat, Pacific Wrens thrive in the old-growth temperate rainforest, and Fox Sparrows are early migrants through Southeast. Not surprising that these wouldn't show up in Anchorage yet (still pretty wintry) or even in today's Juneau checklists.

Tell me what the moa\_gis\_gallery tool can do?

The `moa_gis_gallery` tool gives Claude direct access to the Municipality of Anchorage's ArcGIS Online GIS portal. Here's what it can do:

**1. Find GIS content by topic** (`find_gis_content_for_topic`) The broadest search — ask "do we have data about X?" and it searches both the curated public gallery *and* raw spatial layers at once. Good starting point for any topic: trails, zoning, crime, utilities, avalanche hazard, elections, etc.

**2. Browse the public gallery** (`browse_gallery`) Browses the ~84 curated, publicly-facing MOA GIS products — interactive maps, dashboards, apps, and StoryMaps. Optionally filter by keyword. Good for finding polished, resident-facing tools.

**3. Search for raw spatial layers** (`search_spatial_layers`) Searches MOA ArcGIS Online for underlying data rather than pre-built viewers — Feature Services, Map Services, tile layers, Web Maps, shapefiles, GeoJSON, CSV. You can filter by layer type.

**4. Get a layer's schema** (`get_layer_schema`) Given an item ID or service URL, pulls the full field list for a Feature Service — field names, types, aliases, and coded domain values. Useful for understanding what attributes a dataset actually contains before using it.

**5. Search layers by field name** (`search_layers_by_field`) Finds which MOA Feature Services contain a specific field name or alias — e.g., "which datasets have a flood zone field?" or "which layers include permit type?" Cross-layer field discovery.

In practice these tools work well together: `find_gis_content_for_topic` to discover what exists → `get_layer_schema` to inspect the data structure → `search_layers_by_field` if you're hunting for a specific attribute across multiple datasets. Want me to demo any of them on a specific topic?

What data do we have about trails?

Find gis content for topic >

Good amount of trails data — here's what we've got:

#### Apps & Viewers

- **Parks and Recreation Gallery** — A filter gallery covering park facilities, lands, rentals, and projects including trails
- **Winter Pedestrian App** — A web experience focused on grooming and nordic trails

#### Feature Services (raw data layers)

- **ADNR\_USFS\_Trails\_Hosted** — State (ADNR) and federal (USFS) trails within MOA boundaries
- **ParksRec\_Trails\_Merged** — Parks & Rec trails, looks like a merged/combined layer
- **NordicTrails** — Anchorage nordic trails, tagged with NSAA

#### Web Maps

- **Nordic Trails: Multi-use** — Nordic trails open to multiple uses
- **Nordic Trails: Ski Only** — Nordic ski-only routes
- **Nordic Trails: All Groomed** — Groomed nordic trails across MOA
- **Eagle River/Chugiak Parks and Rec Map** — Parks, trails, and facilities in that area specifically
- **Winter Trails Maintenance (Parks)** — Winter maintenance coverage by Parks & Rec

The data is pretty nordic/winter-heavy, which makes sense given what Parks & Rec actively manages. There's also a distinction between the MOA-managed Parks & Rec trails and the state/federal (ADNR/USFS) trails layer. Want me to pull the schema on any of these to see what attributes they carry?



Can you pull the schema on the NordicTrails?

What are some cool new apps we could create for residents based on all the GIS data we have?

Get layer schema >

Here's what the NordicTrails layer contains — 14 fields on polyline geometry (i.e., trail centerlines):


Field	What it tells you
Grooming_System	The grooming method/equipment used
Grooming_Segment	Named segment of the trail
Difficulty_Level	Easy/Intermediate/Difficult etc.
Ski_Only	Whether the trail is ski-only or multi-use
Grooming_Date	When it was last groomed
Lighted_Trail	Whether it's lit for night skiing
Track_Set	Whether a classic ski track is set
Conditions_Warning	Any active conditions alerts
Grooming_Comments	Free-text notes from groomers
Winter_Maintenance_Organization	Which org maintains it (NSAA, Girdwood Nordic, etc.)
Winter_Contact_Information	Contact for that org
PUBDATE	When the record was last published
Shape__Length	Segment length


This is a pretty operationally rich dataset — `Grooming_Date`, `Track_Set`, and `Conditions_Warning` in particular suggest it's updated regularly during the season. It'd be

Let me browse the full gallery first to get a sense of what data we're already working with before making recommendations.

Browse gallery >

Great dataset to work from. Here are some ideas for new resident-facing apps grounded in data we actually have:

 **Anchorage Outdoor Adventure Planner** Combine nordic trails (with grooming status, difficulty, lighting), parks, trapping closure areas, and avalanche hazard zones into a single "is it safe and ready to go?" app. A resident picks an activity (skiing, hiking, dog walking) and gets a curated, real-time-conditions view. The grooming date and conditions warning fields we just saw in NordicTrails make this especially feasible.

 **"My Commute" Transit + Road Conditions Dashboard** Merge People Mover bus routes/stops, road closures (current & planned), snow plowing status, and sidewalk maintenance providers into a single address-based commute view. "What's happening between me and where I'm going today?" — especially powerful during storm events.

# In Practice: The Translation Engine



Input: Dense legal code  
(Municipal Code 21.05)

Anchorage Permitting  
Assistant

In Anchorage, fences over 6 feet require a permit. Your fence must also meet specific setback requirements. Here are links to Municipal Code 21.05 and Application P-101.

AI does the heavy cognitive lifting, translating complex regulations into an 8th-grade reading level for instant constituent support.

# Pillar 2: Engaging Our Communities

## MULTIMODAL 311

Allow residents to report issues (like potholes) simply by taking a photo and texting it, bypassing complex web forms.



## LANGUAGE FOR ALL



Instantly translate vital 8th-grade level summaries into multiple languages for diverse constituencies.

## DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY



Analyze existing website for ADA-compliance and generate alt-text for images



How could I make request to Anchorage to fix this.

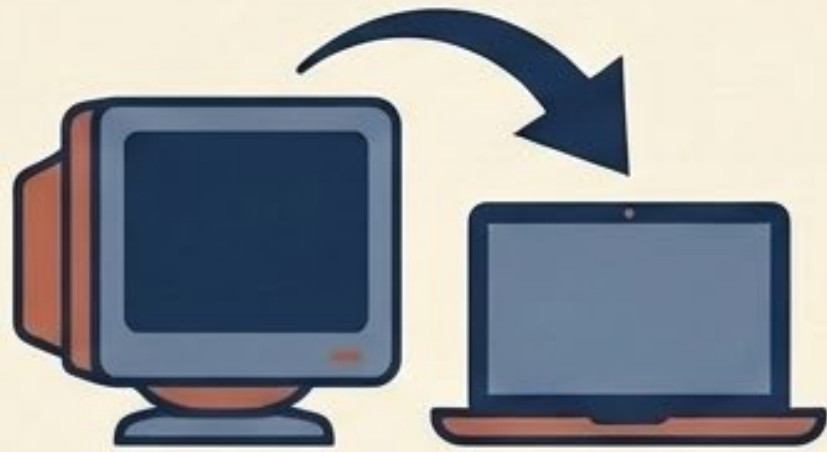
Thought for 1m 20s >

Here's a quick, no-frills way to get this road defect in front of the Municipality so it can be fixed.

## 1. Decide how you want to report it

Method	When it's handy	What to do	Notes
#ANCWorks online form	At your computer/phone and want to attach today's photo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Go to <a href="https://muni.org">muni.org</a> → <b>Report a Problem (#ANCWorks)</b>.</li><li>2. Choose <b>Street Maintenance → Pothole / road surface</b> (or the closest match).</li><li>3. Drop the map pin on <b>650 G Street, between W 6th &amp; W 7th Ave</b> (entrance to the 650 G St parking garage, across from the People Mover stop).</li><li>4. Paste a short description (see template below) and upload your photo.</li><li>5. Submit and note the ticket number for follow-up.</li></ol>	Lets you track progress online. <small>Municipality of Anchorage</small>
Pothole Hotline: 907-343-MEND (6363)	Weekdays 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. when you can make a quick call	Give the dispatcher the same location & description.	Street Maintenance aims to patch reported potholes within 24 hours on workdays. <small>Municipality of Anchorage</small>
Dial 311	If you're already on your cell and can't remember the hotline	Tell the 311 operator "road maintenance issue – pothole" and give them the details.	Anchorage's 311 line routes non-emergency municipal requests. <small>Anchorage Daily News</small>

# Pillar 3: Building Smarter Operations



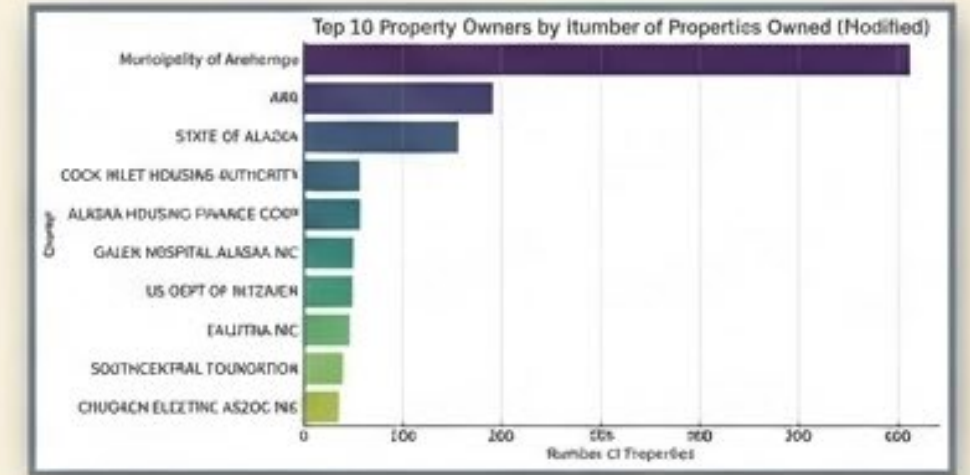
## MODERNIZE LEGACY CODE

Convert and refactor aging but critical municipal computer code into modern, secure languages.



## BETTER TRAINING

Generate highly personalized, on-demand training materials for employees to upskill rapidly.



## COMPELLING COMMUNICATION

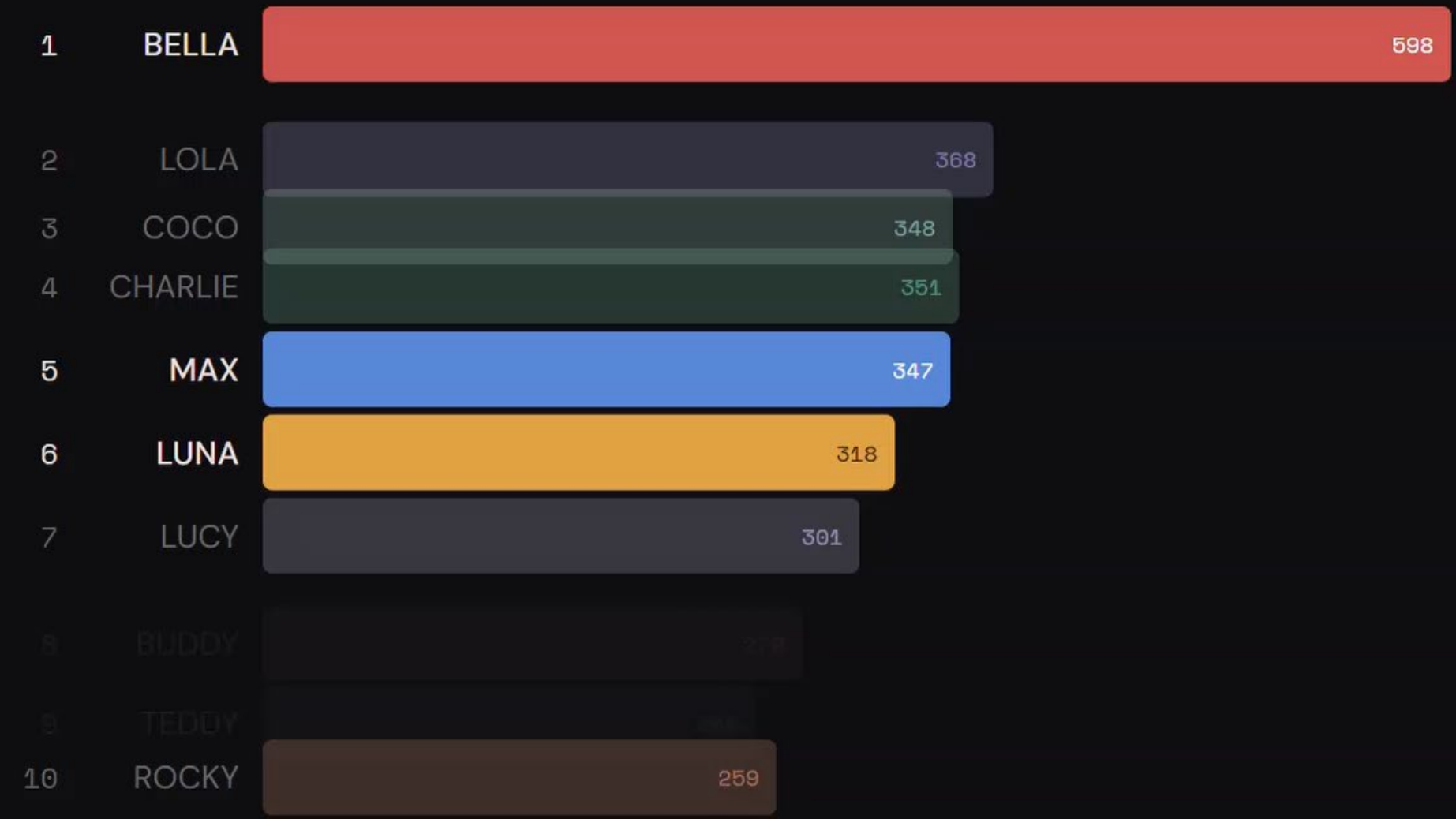
Use AI to turn raw spreadsheets into clear, public-facing data visualizations for employees, the public, and Assembly.

# NYC dog names – top 10 race

2000 – 2023 · NYC Open Data dog licensing dataset

⏪ ⏩ Pause ⏴ ⏵ ————— 2014

■ Max ■ Luna ■ Bella



Source: NYC Open Data. Excludes unnamed / unknown entries.  
Early years (2000–2003) have lower registration counts.

# A Powerful Tool, Not a Replacement for Judgment

As municipal leaders, we must balance innovation with rigorous, human-in-the-loop oversight.



## Institutional Knowledge

How do we ensure we don't lose the unwritten wisdom of our organizations to automation?

## The Future of Work

What is the impact on entry-level jobs?  
Are we saving time, or just shifting work and risk to other people?

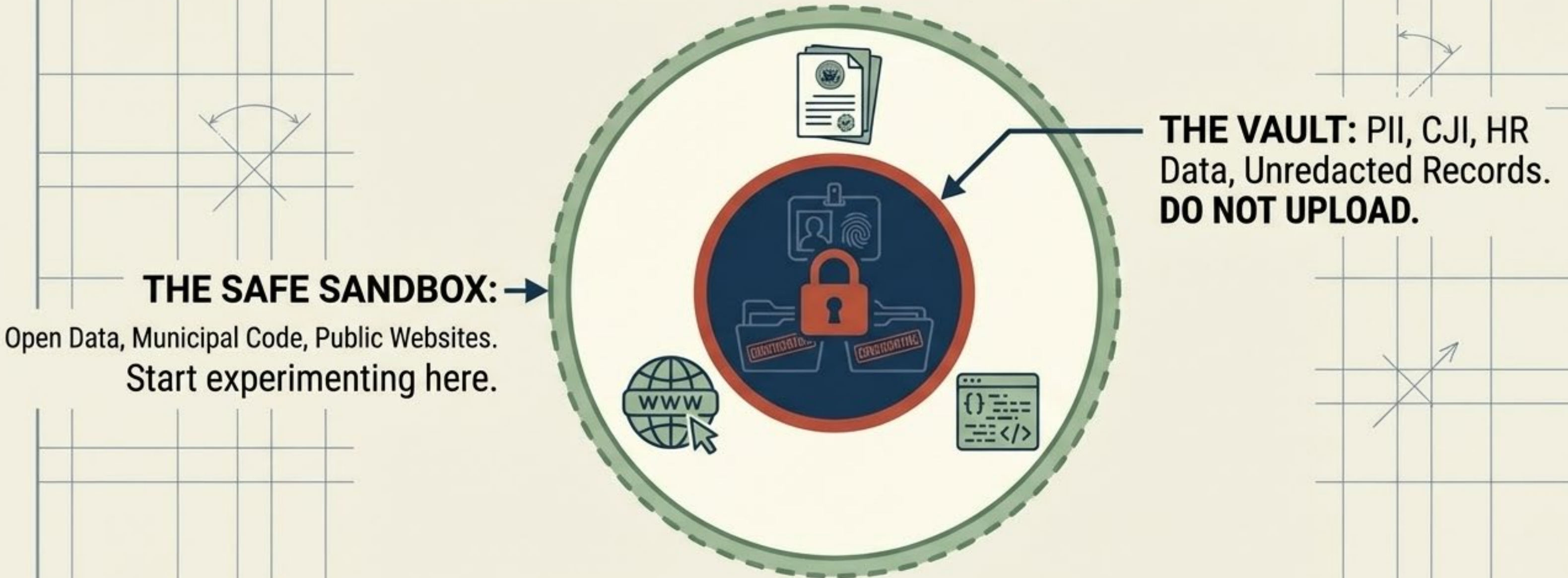
## Trust but Verify

AI hallucinates and can give overly confident wrong answers. The "Human in the Loop" is an absolute requirement.

# The Governance Guardrails Matrix

The Municipal Risk	The "Sandbox" Rule	The Human Mitigation
Data Privacy	Never input PII, CJI, or internal HR data into public models.	Use only published, open data for experimentation.
Hallucinations	AI cannot be the final author of public policy or legal advice.	AI drafts, Human verifies, Human signs.
Public Records Laws	Assume AI prompt histories may be subject to FOIA/records retention.	Treat AI interfaces like public email correspondence.
Autonomous Action	Never give AI "Agent" permissions to execute financial or legal actions.	AI proposes actions; Humans click "execute."

# Defining the Safe Municipal Sandbox



You don't need to risk sensitive data to see massive gains.  
The vast majority of early AI value lives securely in the public domain.

# On the Horizon: What to Prepare For Next



## VIBE CODING

Describing a niche tool you need (e.g., “an app to track snow plows”) and having AI build a working prototype instantly.



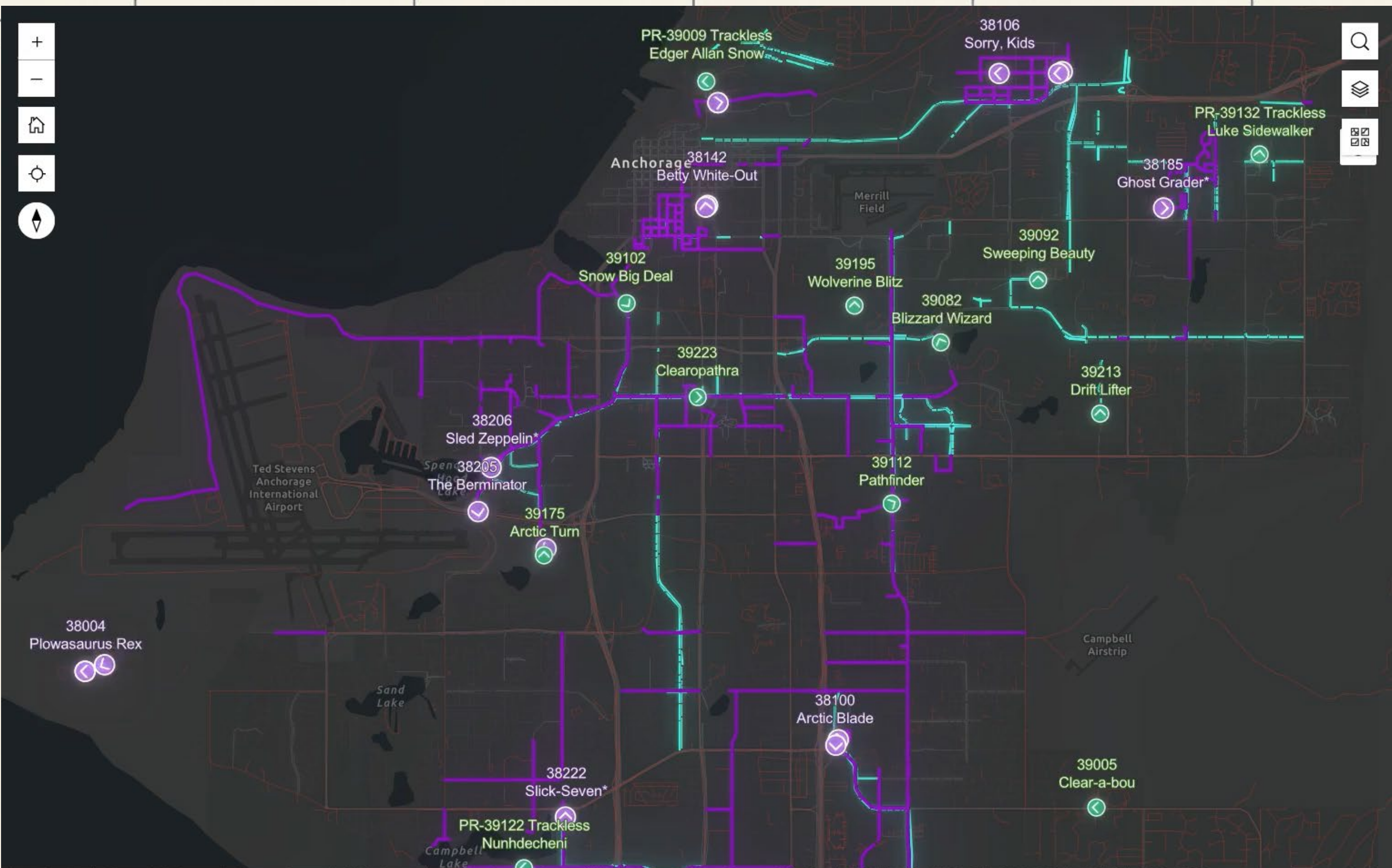
## AUTONOMOUS AGENTS

AI assistants that can perform multi-step tasks, like researching and drafting an initial grant report.



## ADVANCED ASSET ANALYSIS

Using AI image analysis on vehicle dashcams to automatically inventory city assets like streetlights and hydrants.



Kenai Peninsula Borough, Matanuska-Susitna Borough GIS, Municipality of Anchorage, State of Alaska, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS | GDIC, MNO Powered by Esri



**Time  
Travelling  
GeoGuessr**



You are an expert time travelling Geo-Guessr and historian. Where and when was this photo taken?

Thought for 13 seconds >

**My best "time-machine-meets-Google Street View" guess**

Likeliest answer

**Where**

Playa Santa Teresa / Mal País, Nicoya Peninsula, Puntarenas Province, Costa Rica – standing near the high-tide line and looking north-east along the beach.

**When**

Dry-season late afternoon, January 2006  $\pm$  1 year (2005-07 window).

## How the breadcrumbs line up

Visual clue	What it points to
Coarse, pale-grey beach of broken coral & shell	Characteristic of the Nicoya Peninsula's south-west coast, where uplifted reef rubble mixes with volcanic sand. Caribbean or SE-Asia strands usually show finer white carbonate or darker basaltic sand.
Back-beach vegetation	A rim of sea-almond ( <i>Terminalia catappa</i> ) and coconut palms merges into dense secondary rainforest on steep foothills – a textbook profile of Santa Teresa/Mal País, where the Cabo Blanco hills crowd the shoreline.
Green ridge finishing abruptly at the shoreline	The Cabo Blanco–El Sueco headland creates exactly that look just north of Mal País; farther north the Nicoya interior flattens out.
Plume of white smoke in the foothills	Small dry-season brush burns by local fincas are common in January–March on the Nicoya.
Lighting & sky	Warm, very low sun hitting the subject's left cheek suggests ~5:15-5:30 p.m. in January (sunset ~6:00 p.m. at 9° N).
Camera look	5- to 7-megapixel compact-digital era (Canon PowerShot S-series / Nikon Coolpix "L" era) – crisp but a bit noisy in the shadows, matching 2004-07 consumer gear.
Shirt & travel fashion	Black pin-stripe casual shirt, sun-reddened skin, and a solo "selfie" (arm's-length wide-angle) fit mid-2000s backpacker snapshots before smartphones normalized front-facing cameras.

Put together, the coastal geomorphology, flora, lighting, and mid-2000s digicam vibe converge most tightly

## ANCHORAGE MOA Street Plow Status

Enter your Anchorage address to see when your street was last plowed.

1230 W. 27th

Check

1230 W 27th Ave, Anchorage, AK, 99503

### W 27th Ave

## 1 week ago

Monday, Mar 9 at 2:37 AM

Plowing Priority 3 (Residential) Truck: 38222

#### OTHER NEARBY ROADS

Unnamed Rd No record

Spenard Rd 2 days ago

[View on MOA Snow Operations Map](#)

Plow data from [Municipality of Anchorage](#) Snow Operations. Updates in real-time as trucks report in.

Created by [Code for Anchorage](#).

**For Entertainment Purposes Only.** This is not an official Municipality of Anchorage application. Information may be incorrect — for official plow status visit [muni.org/plow](http://muni.org/plow).

MOA Winter Street Maintenance Operations

MOA St. Maintenance Muni.org/plow CVD Friendly

Not Plowed in last 10 days

Zoom to

Plowing service last reported at 2:37:20 AM on Monday, March 9 (13 days ago)

W 27th Ave (Snow route), a Residential

Activity - Last 30-min

Arbor Cir	3/22/26, 12:08 PM
Arcadia Dr	3/22/26, 12:09 PM
Arcadia Dr	3/22/26, 12:09 PM
Arlington Dr	3/22/26, 12:12 PM
Arlington Dr	3/22/26, 12:12 PM
Arlington Dr	3/22/26, 12:12 PM
Arlington Dr N	3/22/26, 12:11 PM
Arlington Dr N	3/22/26, 12:11 PM
Arlington Dr N	3/22/26, 12:12 PM

Graders with Active GPS: 1  
location may not always be visible on map

Trackless with Active GPS: 0  
location may not always be visible on map

Trackless vehicle (sidewalks)

Grader vehicle (roads)

Status-Streets

last serviced

- Within last 6 hours
- Between 6 hours and 24 hours
- Between 24 hours and 48 hours
- Between 2 days and 10 days
- Not Plowed in last 10 days

ADP Maintained Sidewalks

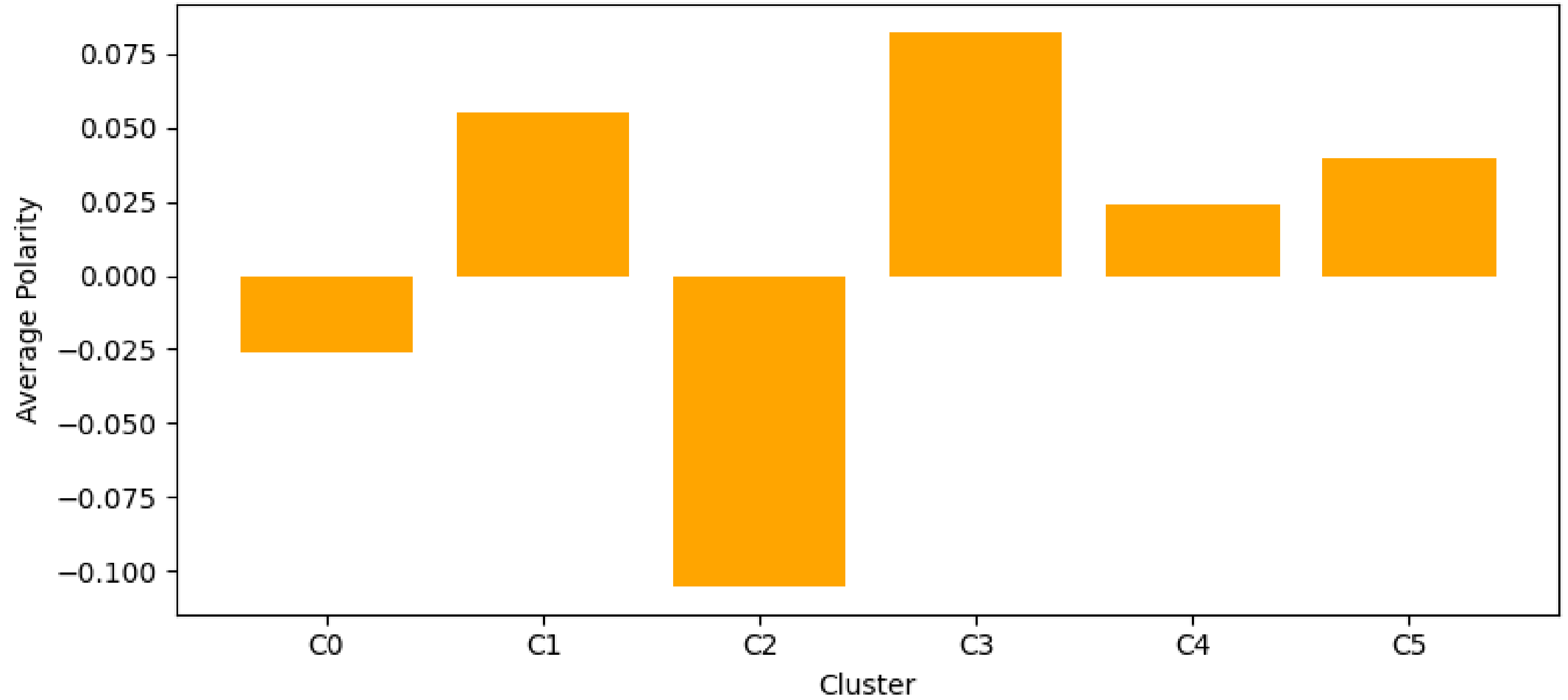
Status-Sidewalk/Trails

last serviced

- Within last 6 hours
- Between 6 hours and 24 hours
- Between 24 hours and 48 hours
- Between 2 days and 10 days
- Not Plowed in last 10 days

Not MOA Plowed

Average Sentiment Polarity per Cluster



# WCAG Audit

## *Skill for* Claude

Automated WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility audits for government websites using three complementary data sources — axe-core, Chrome accessibility tree, and manual DOM inspection. A personal project by Brendan Babb.

[View on GitHub ↗](#)

[Get started](#)

### baltimorecity.gov — WCAG 2.1 AA audit

March 26, 2026 · Homepage · 3-source audit

Score	Critical	Serious	Moderate	Minor	Passing
71	0	2	4	1	50

All (7)

Images / ARIA

Structure

Forms

Links

Contrast

Serious axe-core manual WCAG 1.1.1 (A) Template

#### External link icons missing alternative text

27 span.fa-ext.extlink elements with role="img" and aria-hidden="false" have no aria-label. These are the external link indicator icons injected by Drupal across every external link on the site. Screen readers encounter them as unnamed images. axe-core flagged 7 as violations; manual inspection found 27 total.

**Fix:** Either add `aria-hidden="true"` to each `span.fa-ext.extlink` (preferred — the icon is decorative since link text already conveys purpose), or add `aria-label="external link"`. This is a Drupal theme template fix — one change covers every external link sitewide.

Serious manual WCAG 4.1.2 (A) Template + Page

#### Form inputs missing label associations

8 form inputs lack proper label associations. Affected elements include: the main search submit button (`#edit-submit`), mobile search input and submit (`#mobile-search-input`, `#mobile-search-submit`), and 5 Google Translate internal inputs (`#goog-gt-voting*`). Screen readers cannot identify the purpose of these fields.

**Fix:** For `#edit-submit` and mobile search elements, add `aria-label="Search"` or associate with the existing label via `for` attribute. The Google Translate inputs are injected by the third-party widget — consider hiding them from the accessibility tree with `aria-hidden="true"` on the GT container, or accept as a third-party limitation.

what GTFS MCP tools are available?

All 10 GTFS tools are now fully loaded. Here's the complete set:

Tool	What it does
<code>list_systems</code>	List all configured transit systems
<code>get_system_status</code>	Route/stop counts, active alert count, feed status
<code>list_routes</code>	All routes, filterable by type (bus, rail, etc.)
<code>get_route</code>	Ordered stop list for a route; specify <code>direction_id</code> 0 or 1
<code>search_stops</code>	Find stops by name (partial match)
<code>get_stop</code>	Stop details + which routes serve it
<code>get_arrivals</code>	Upcoming arrivals at a stop; real-time when available; filterable by route
<code>get_vehicles</code>	Live GPS position, bearing, speed for all buses; filterable by route
<code>get_trip</code>	Full stop sequence with exact per-stop times and delay data for a specific trip
<code>get_alerts</code>	Active service alerts; filterable by route or stop

The two we were missing earlier — `get_route` and `get_trip` — are now in the mix, and as we saw today those are the ones that unlock the most powerful use cases: direction-aware routing and precise per-stop timing for transfer planning.

- Agents hitting your websites now
- Voice assist
- Computer use
- Agents booking services
- Google browser assist
- Alexa
- City Unit Tests
- Experiment

- Employees using AI – give them city approved solution & Teams channel
- Provide Responsible AI training –  
Innovate US
- Internal Guidelines
- Badges
- AI Labeled for Public

- Help employees and residents
- NAVA – Form Filling Assistant
- Propel – Coaching from listening to a call during a SNAP Interview
- Propel – Answering challenging questions for residents
- Boston – Guidelines – Training – Lunch and Learns