

APA GA CONFERENCE · SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

Who Serves the Planners? From Disaster to AI-Assisted Plan Review

How regional partnerships strengthen resilience, what AI can and cannot do in planning, and practical strategies for modernizing permitting.



SPEAKERS



Corrin Wendell, FAICP
Strategic Advisor | **Blitz AI**



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Project Manager | **MGO**

Today's Agenda

Setting the Stage

- 1 After Hurricane Katrina, South Louisiana communities proved that resilience isn't just about infrastructure—it's about collaboration.

Agencies Role in Recovery

Seven coastal parishes pooled resources to create a shared permitting and development platform that evolved from paper to AI-assisted review.

Planning Strategies and Solutions

- 3 Explore how regional partnerships strengthen resilience, what AI can and cannot do in planning, and practical strategies for modernizing permitting while preserving the planner's critical role in professional judgment and decision-making.



Public/Public Partnership

Collaborative Efforts Enhancing
Public Sector Initiatives

Created by Government for Government

TRUSTED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND JURISDICTIONS

UC Berkeley

City of
Rockville
Rise Together

YEARS OF FORGING PROGRESS
PIGEON FORGE
TENNESSEE

Pilot Point
TEXAS

The right place in Texas.
Odessa

CITY OF CAMPBELL
THE ORCHARD CITY

GEORGETOWN
TEXAS
more than welcome



Lafayette
CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

AMARILLO
CITY OF



SEVIER COUNTY
TENNESSEE



HOUSTON AIRPORTS

CITY OF OF
AGOURA HILLS

Campbell, California
THE ORCHARD CITY

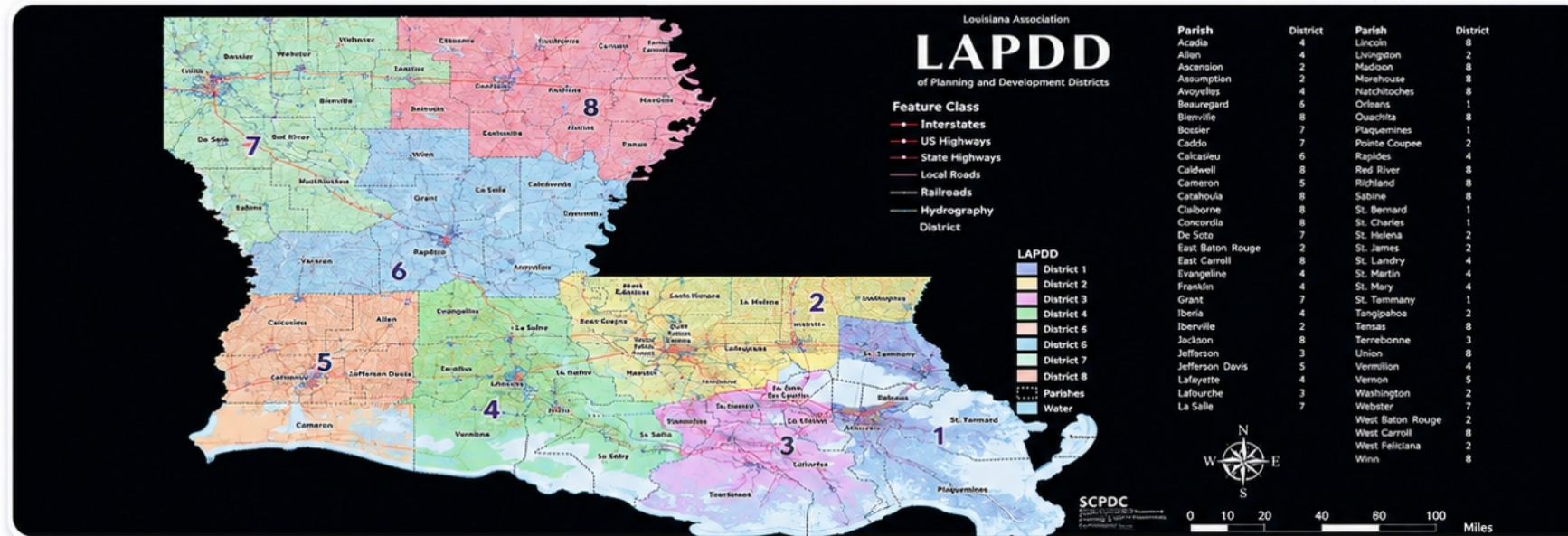
SAN BRUNO
California

SDSU | San Diego State
University

Santa Margarita
Water District

OUR ORGANIZATION

A public agency serving public agencies.



1. Who We Are

South Central Planning & Development Commission (SCPDC) is a regional governmental organization serving South Louisiana and supporting local governments through planning, economic development, shared services, and technology-driven solutions.



2. Public Service Mission

SCPDC is a public-sector organization, not a private software company. Its mission is to help governments collaborate, share resources, and solve common operational challenges.



3. The MGO Division

MyGovernmentOnline is SCPDC's technology and software-services division, delivering permitting, licensing, planning, inspection, and citizen-service tools through a Public/Public Partnership model.

SCPDC and MGO are built on a shared mission —
created by government, for government.

A FAMILIAR MODEL IN CALIFORNIA

SCPDC is similar to the regional governmental entities California cities already know.



Like California's
regional agencies,
SCPDC is a public
organization built to
serve local governments.



Examples of California regional entities



1. Shared Public Mission

These organizations help local governments collaborate, plan regionally, and deliver shared public services.



2. Similar Regional Role

California uses councils of governments, planning agencies, and transportation commissions. Louisiana uses planning and development commissions like SCPDC.



3. Why It Matters

MGO comes from the same public-service model — agencies working together to support cities, counties, and communities.

Different state. Same public-service concept.

OUR STORY

Born from public-sector need. Built through public-sector collaboration.



1. The Need

After Hurricane Katrina, local governments needed a better way to coordinate permitting, inspections, rebuilding activity, and public service delivery across jurisdictions.



2. The Problem

Traditional private-sector software did not fully provide the flexibility, affordability, and public accountability local governments needed.



3. The Partnership

Jurisdictions came together to build a Public/Public Partnership model, shaping software specifically for government operations and continuous improvement.

MyGovernmentOnline grew from that mission —
created by government, for government.

ORIGINS OF THE PUBLIC / PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP

Hurricane Katrina revealed the need for a new model of regional government collaboration.



1. The Damage

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused catastrophic flooding and widespread damage across South Louisiana, exposing how vulnerable local government operations could become during a major disaster.



2. The Need

Jurisdictions needed a better way to coordinate permitting, inspections, rebuilding, and public service delivery across agencies and communities.



3. The Partnership

That need led to a Public / Public Partnership model—governments working together through SCPDC to build shared tools designed specifically for government operations.

From disaster response came a stronger model for long-term collaboration.

A PUBLIC ORGANIZATION BUILT ON COLLABORATION

Direct engagement with jurisdictions drives innovation, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement.



1. Jurisdiction-Led Input

Partner agencies share real operational needs, workflows, and ideas that help shape the platform.



2. Training & Knowledge Sharing

MGO Connect, workshops, and peer-to-peer conversations help jurisdictions learn from one another and from MGO staff.



3. Continuous Improvement

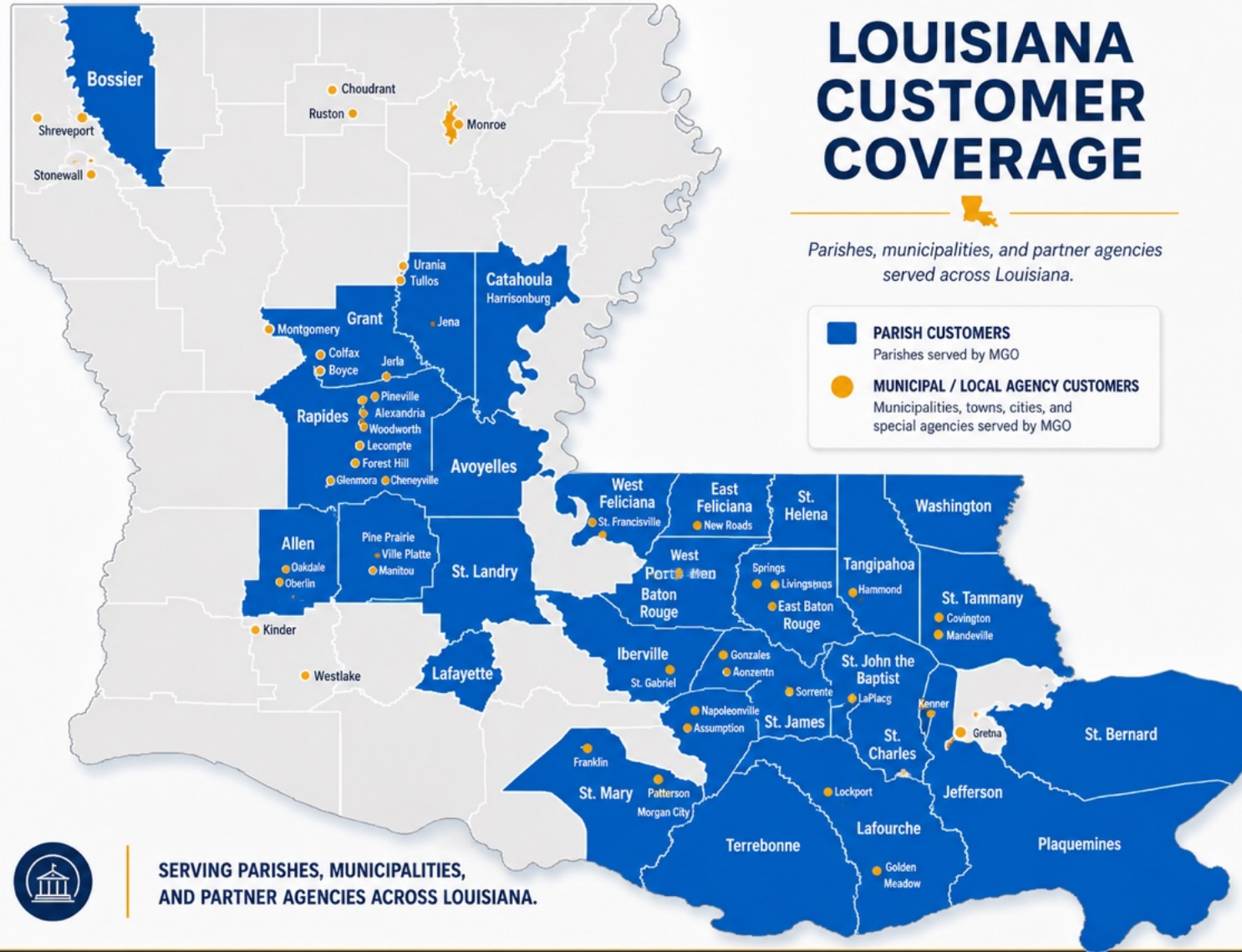
Feedback becomes enhancements, best practices, and better tools for government operations.

Collaboration is not an add-on — it is the foundation of the Public / Public Partnership.

LOUISIANA CUSTOMER COVERAGE

*Parishes, municipalities, and partner agencies
served across Louisiana.*

- **PARISH CUSTOMERS**
Parishes served by MGO
- **MUNICIPAL / LOCAL AGENCY CUSTOMERS**
Municipalities, towns, cities, and
special agencies served by MGO



**SERVING PARISHES, MUNICIPALITIES,
AND PARTNER AGENCIES ACROSS LOUISIANA.**



MGO CONNECT *LIVE*

AI-POWERED. ADMIN-DRIVEN.



2026 National Conference



December 9–11 • New Orleans, Louisiana



Register at live.mgoconnect.org



300+ Attendees

Connect with MGO partners
from across the country.



Breakout Sessions

Learn from industry experts,
MGO staff, and peer agencies.



Best Practices & New Features

See practical workflows,
upcoming enhancements,
and real-world ideas.



Training



Networking



Product Education

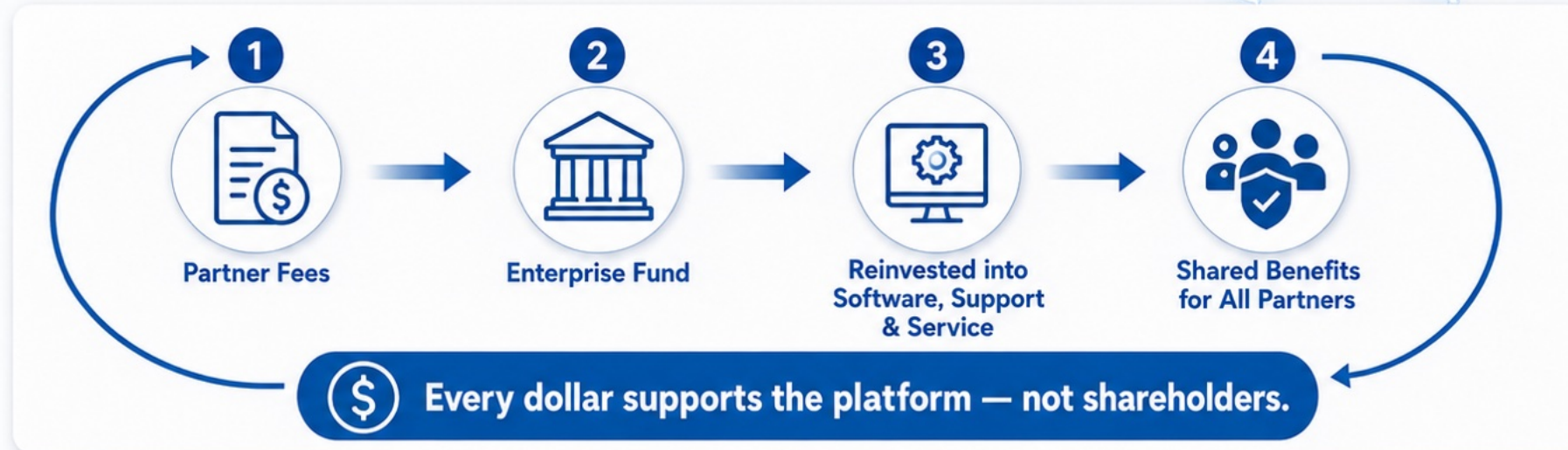


Live Support

An annual gathering for MGO partners to learn, connect, and help shape what comes next.

COST SAVINGS THROUGH A PUBLIC / PUBLIC MODEL

MGO's enterprise-fund structure keeps costs focused on service, sustainability, and shared value.



No Shareholders



No Profit Motive



Historically No Upfront Cost



Low Monthly Fees



No Automatic Annual Increases



1. Reinvestment, Not Profit

MGO operates as an enterprise fund. Revenue is invested directly back into software features, service, support, and long-term platform sustainability rather than private profit.



2. Predictable Cost Structure

Historically, MGO has had no upfront cost and low monthly fees, with pricing designed for long-term stability rather than automatic annual increases.



3. Shared Value for Partners

Because enhancements and service improvements are shared across the partner network, jurisdictions benefit from a collaborative model that stretches every dollar further.

The goal is not to maximize profit — it is to build the best long-term functionality partners truly need.



MAJOR SOFTWARE AREAS

A unified platform supporting multiple core government operations.



Permitting &
Licensing



Planning &
Zoning



Code
Enforcement



Public
Works



And Much
More



31
States



Thousands
of Implementations



12,000+
Active Users

One platform. Multiple departments. Shared innovation for every partner.

A COMPLETE SOLUTION

One platform for modern government operations,
partner service, and next-generation plan review.



Full-Service & AI-Assisted Customer Portal

Self-service applications,
payments, status tracking
and AI assistant support.



Automated Application & Workflow Management

Intelligent routing,
approvals, and automation
that keeps work moving.



Project Management

Centralized projects,
tasks, documents,
and team collaboration.



Work Order System

Create, assign, track, and
resolve work with full
visibility and accountability.



Next Generation Plan Review

AI-guided reviews, in-browser
editing, markup tools, and
automated checks.



Self-Service Admin Tools

Configure forms, workflows,
fees, reports, and users—
no code required.

MODERN PLAN REVIEW & WORKFLOW

FLEXIBLE PDF EDITING

Your Preferred
Editor



OR

In-Browser Editor



AI-POWERED REVIEW WORKFLOW



AI-Guided
Submittals



Unified
Task Queue



Flexible Plan
Review Tools



AI-Drafted
Letters



KPI Dashboards
& Automation



Permitting &
Licensing



Planning &
Zoning



Code
Enforcement



Public
Works



Asset
Management



Community
Engagement



And
Much More

A unified platform that helps jurisdictions serve customers,
manage work, and modernize operations.

ASK AIDEN

A Smarter Way to Explore MGO

Aiden helps prospective and current partners, along with implementation teams, learn how MGO supports local government — from features and department use cases to implementation guidance.



Ask Aiden

MGO product intelligence

● Online

What makes MGO different from a basic online permitting portal?



MGO is designed as a broader government operations platform. It can support permitting, planning, licensing, code enforcement, inspections, public works workflows, and more — while also improving submittal quality, review speed, and visibility across departments.

Can it help reduce incomplete submittals?



Yes. Ask Aiden can explain how MGO's AI-assisted and guided intake experience can help applicants understand requirements earlier, improve responses, and reduce avoidable back-and-forth before staff review begins.

AI features

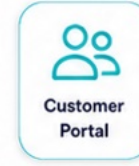
Plan review

Public works

Implementation

💬 Ask anything about MGO...

Send



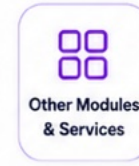
Customer
Portal



Permits &
Licensing



Planning &
Zoning



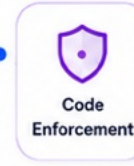
Other Modules
& Services



MGO Knowledge & Workflows



Public Works /
EAM



Code
Enforcement

Ask Aiden



Explore MGO
Capabilities

Learn about modules, services, features, and use cases.



Support Evaluation
& Onboarding

Help prospective partners and implementation teams understand what MGO can do.



Guide Better
Conversations

Surface relevant product information faster for staff and partners.

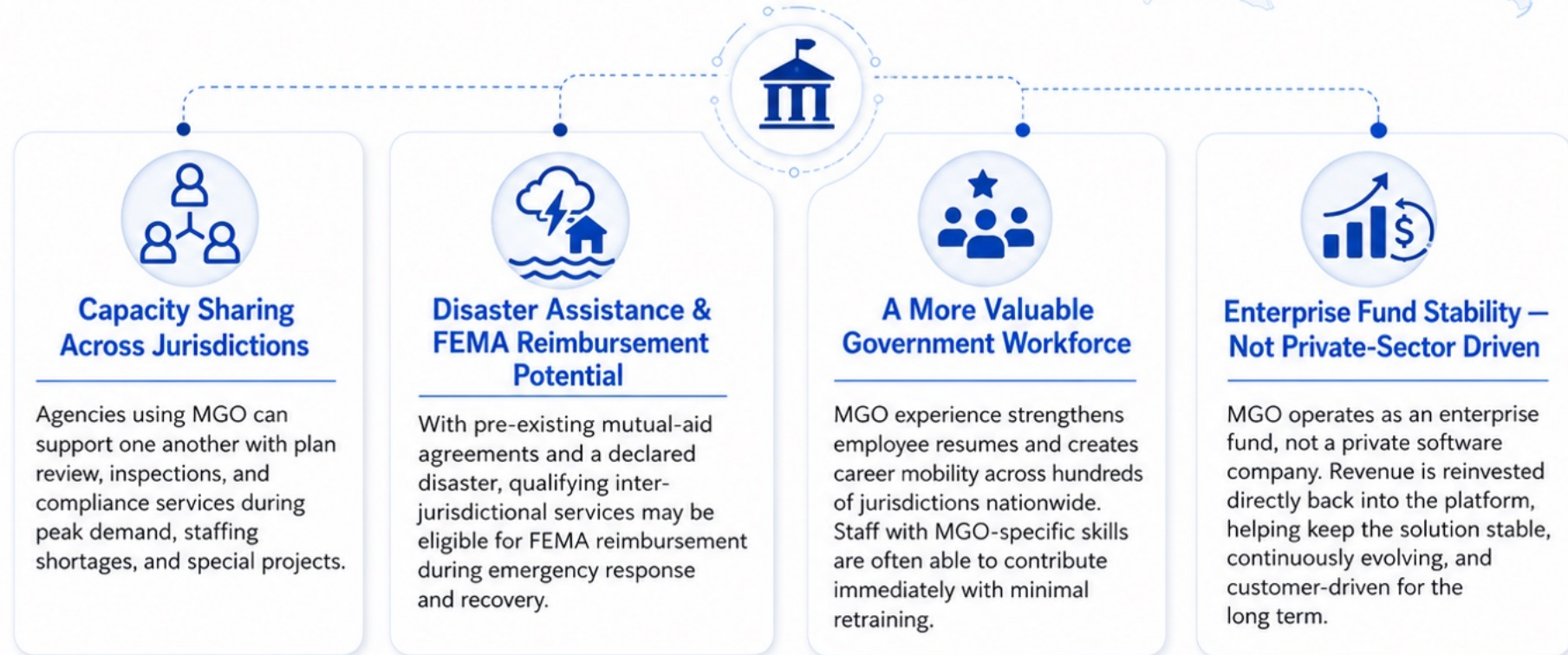
Ask Aiden helps agencies explore MGO faster — improving understanding, adoption, and implementation readiness.



GOVERNMENT RESILIENCY

Working Together Through a Shared Government Platform

A connected partner network helps agencies support one another, respond to disruption, and build long-term operational stability.



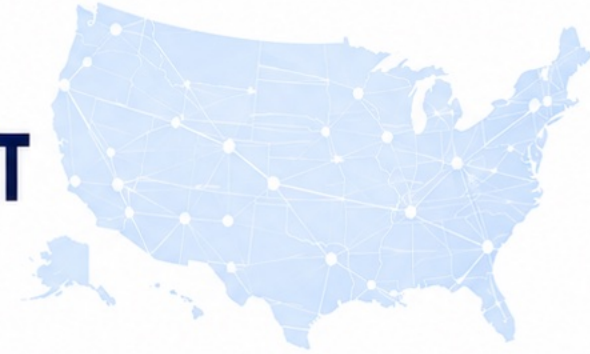
Shared technology. Shared knowledge. Stronger agencies together.

South Central Planning & Development Commission

FEMA MUTUAL AID REIMBURSEMENT

Key Qualifications for Government Resiliency

A shared platform can help agencies document, coordinate, and deploy mutual-aid services more efficiently.



1. Pre-Disaster Agreements

Written inter-jurisdictional agreements or compacts should be in place before the disaster occurs.



2. Requested by Impacted Jurisdiction

Services must be formally requested by the disaster-impacted jurisdiction.



3. Eligible Disaster-Related Work

Work may include emergency response, inspections, permitting, floodplain, or building-code administration tied to a declared disaster.



4. Documented Costs

Labor, equipment, travel, transportation, and mission logs must be documented to support reimbursement.



5. Assisting Jurisdiction Reimbursement

Reimbursement typically applies to the providing jurisdiction that deployed resources.



6. MGO Enables Rapid Deployment

Shared workflows and standardization help agencies mobilize faster for plan review, inspections, and code compliance support.



Mutual aid works best when agencies are connected before the emergency.

References: FEMA Public Assistance Program & Policy Guide;
FEMA Post-Disaster Floodplain & Building Code Administration Fact Sheet.

SUMMARY

★ Key Takeaways



- Bring awareness to out-of-state government partnership opportunities.
- Louisiana local jurisdictions came together to meet their own needs — and how YOUR local governments can do the same.
- Plan ahead to better position your agency for FEMA funding and mutual-aid reimbursement opportunities.
- Small and mid-sized governments may not receive the same media attention as major metropolitan areas, but WE can work together to become more resilient.
- Questions



Polling Questions

What Do You Think?

Raise Your Hand...

How many of you spent more than an hour this week looking for something inside your zoning ordinance? How many answered the same zoning question three times? How many rewrote a staff report that looked almost identical to the last one?



Searching Ordinances

Looking Up
Setbacks

Answering Applicant
Questions

Finding
Policies

Writing
Reports

Researching Past
Approvals

The biggest opportunity: reducing time spent finding information while increasing consistency.

A Planner's Perspective



Augment, Not Replace

AI should augment planners — not replace them.



Reduce Research Time

Improve consistency and retain institutional knowledge.



Free Planners

Focus on people, policy, and problem solving.



Where Planning Time Goes



Planning departments spend time on:

- Searching ordinances
- Looking up setbacks
- Answering applicant questions
- Finding policies
- Writing reports
- Researching past approvals

The biggest opportunity:
Reduce time finding information
while increasing consistency.

AI Foundations

What AI Does Well ✓

- Summarizes
- Organizes
- Compares
- Searches
- Extracts
- Drafts

What AI Does Poorly ✗

- Making policy
- Professional judgment
- Politics & negotiation
- Community values
- Ethics

Where AI Can Assist

Zoning Research

Instantly find setbacks, lot coverage, and use standards.

Development Review

Summarize applications and flag code issues.

Permit Review

Identify incomplete items and required approvals.

Staff Reports

Draft consistent, structured reports faster.

Meeting Summaries

Capture key decisions and action items.

Customer Service

Answer resident and applicant questions accurately.

AI in Action: Key Scenarios



Resident & Applicant Questions

AI searches ordinances instantly — setbacks, height, lot coverage — then planner verifies.



Summarize a 250-Page Plan

AI extracts land use goals, housing policies, transportation, economic development, and environmental strategies.



Summarize a Development Application

Instead of 80 pages, AI produces a project summary, major issues, potential concerns, and applicable code.

Scenario Deep Dive: Resident Questions

The Question

"Can I build a detached garage?"

AI Searches the Ordinance

- Setback requirements
- Height limits
- Lot coverage
- Accessory use standards

Planner verifies. Done.



Real-World Scenarios

Resident Questions

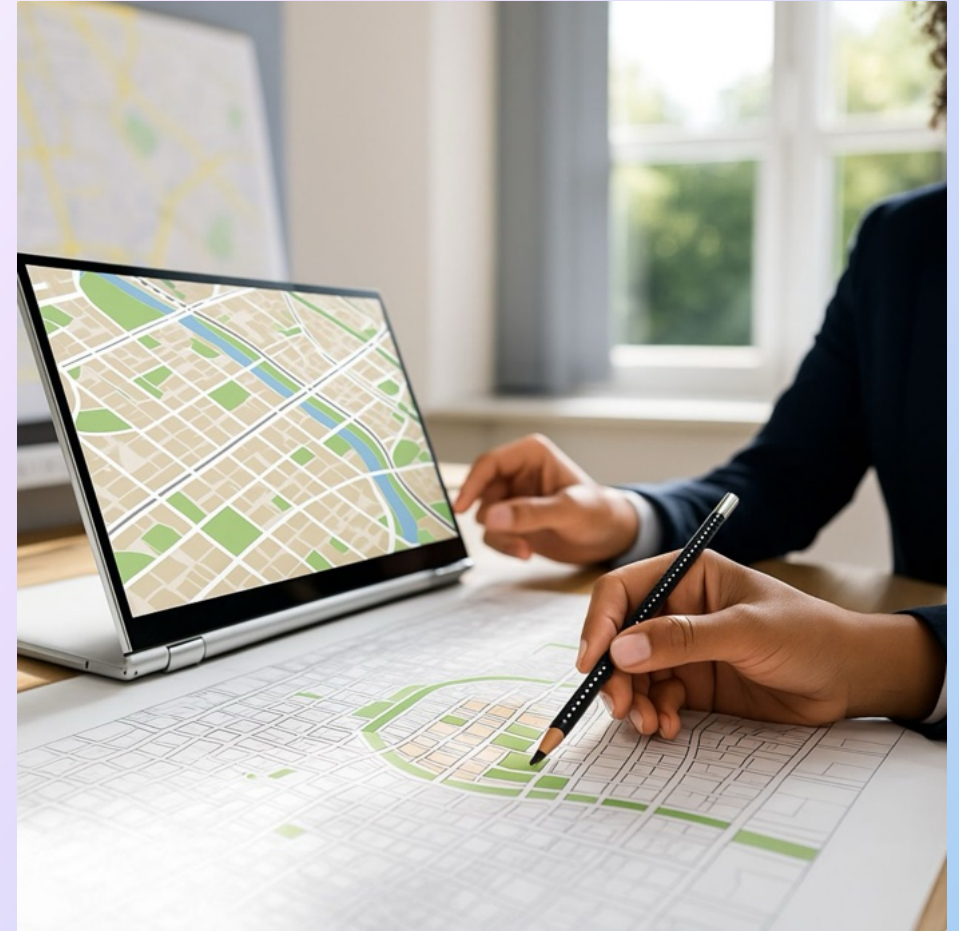
Applicant asks: *"Can I build a detached garage?"* AI searches the ordinance for setbacks, height, lot coverage, and accessory use standards — planner verifies.

Comprehensive Plan Summary

Ask AI to summarize a 250-page plan into an executive summary: land use goals, housing policies, transportation, economic development, and environmental policies.

Development Application

Instead of 80 pages, AI produces a project summary, major issues, potential concerns, and applicable code.



Summarize a 250-Page Comprehensive Plan

Ask AI: Can you summarize this Plan into an Executive Summary?

Finds:

- Land Use Goals
- Housing Policies
- Transportation Goals
- Economic Development Strategies
- Environmental Policies



Summarize a Development Application

Instead of:

- 80 pages

AI produces:

- Project summary
- Major issues
- Potential concerns
- Applicable code

Where would this save your department time?



Assist with Development Review



Reviewing a Site Plan

AI can assist with calculating:

- Density, FAR, Impervious surface
- Landscape requirements, Tree Counts
- Building setbacks, Lighting, Signs
- Parking Spaces
- ADA requirements
- Bike and EV spaces
- Overlay Districts

The Future of Permit Review

Today

Software says: "**Not compliant.**"

Tomorrow

AI lists incomplete items, flags CUP or variance needs, historic and floodplain review requirements, downtown standards, Planning Commission review, and estimated timelines — shifting from code checker to **permit navigator**.

Top 10 AI Uses Tomorrow Morning

1. Search zoning ordinances
2. Find Comprehensive Plan policies
3. Draft staff reports
4. Meeting summaries
5. Rewrite difficult emails
6. Public notices
7. Development summaries
8. FAQ responses
9. Compare ordinance versions
10. Brainstorm engagement ideas

Top 10 AI Uses — Starting Tomorrow

01

Search zoning ordinances

02

Find Comprehensive Plan policies

03

Draft staff reports

04

Meeting summaries

05

Rewrite difficult emails

06

Public notices

07

Development summaries

08

FAQ responses

09

Compare ordinance versions

10

Brainstorm engagement ideas

Success Story: Permitting Streamlined

After Hurricane Milton damaged homes and infrastructure in 2024, causing an influx in new building applications, Hernando County, Florida, employed an AI that can read permit applications and compare them to zoning requirements to determine code compliance. This process which used to take the county 45 to 60 days, now can be completed in two to three minutes.

As Natural Disasters Increase

Climate-vulnerable places can now streamline the permitting process.

AI is Here

Planners are using it for everything from transportation and permitting to environmental monitoring and more.





Success Story: Automating the Task, Not the People

AI replaced 8,500 customer service roles at IKEA. Every human KEPT their jobs, retrained as interior designers, and that new advisory service has pulled in \$1.4 billion extra revenue. Its AI chatbot Billie, began handling routine customer inquiries, and reskilled employees in more complex roles, like relationship-building.

More Value for Employees

Took the knowledge they already had built and then asked how that could create more value elsewhere.

AI + Human Equation

Technology provides scale and speed, while people provide judgement, creativity, and connection. IKEA redesigned the work around both.



Continuous Learning & Professional Development

One of the biggest misconceptions is that you need to become a data scientist to use AI. You don't. The most valuable skill planners can develop is **AI literacy**—understanding how to ask better questions, evaluate AI-generated information, and responsibly incorporate AI into everyday planning practice.

AI for Productivity: University of Minnesota

Generative AI 6 courses: Planetizen, Tom Sanchez, AICP, PhD

Microsoft AI Skills / Career Essentials in Generative AI

"5 Ways Planners Use AI in Their Work Today": Planning Mag

"AI literacy is quickly becoming as important to planners as GIS literacy became a generation ago."



The Real Question Isn't *Whether* — It's *How*

Twenty years ago, planners learned GIS and SketchUp. Ten years ago, online engagement tools. **Today, planners are learning AI.**

AI Cannot Replace

Your experience, public trust, ethics, or community values.

AI Can Help With

Less time searching ordinances and writing repetitive reports — more time listening, solving problems, and building consensus.



The Future Belongs to Planners Who Lead

The question isn't *whether* AI belongs in planning — it's *how* planners will shape its use. AI cannot replace experience, public trust, ethics, or community values.

But it can **free you** to do what planners do best:

Listening

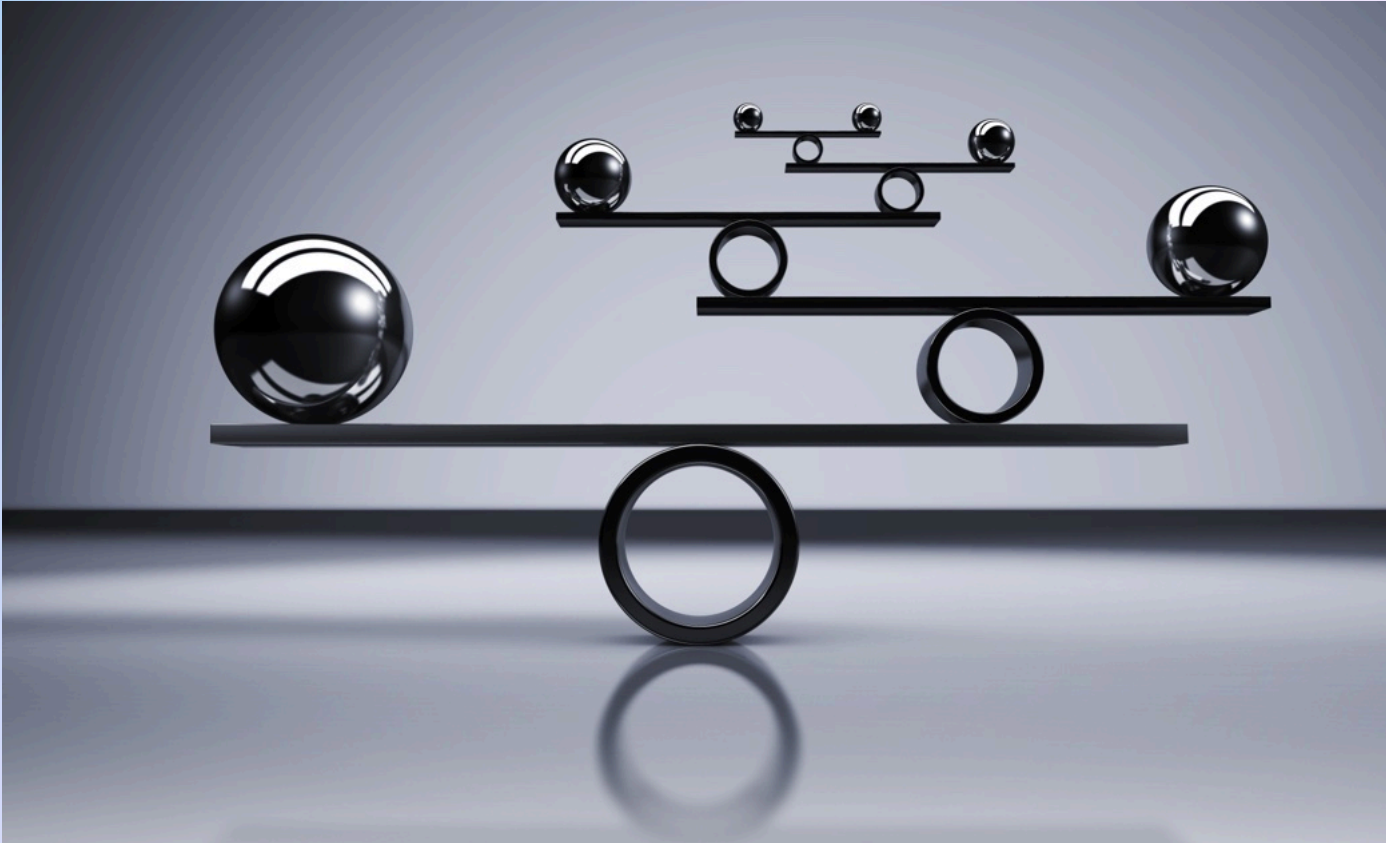
Solving Problems

Building Consensus

Creating Great Communities

The world is always going to need great planners, who do great work.

Ethics for Planners



Major Consideration

The ethics of AI use are a major consideration for planners. AI should not overshadow the intrinsic human touch, characterized by context and empathy, which has been central to effective urban planning. JAPA article

It is the Planner's Role to:

- Use all available facts
- Proceed in a way that best serves the public
- Gain more knowledge where needed
- Explore options

Technology for Planners



The Goal

AI isn't about replacing planners — it's about reducing repetitive work so planners can focus on **analysis, collaboration, public engagement, and creating better communities.**

Looking Through a Practitioner's Lens

- Improved access to information
- More efficient workflows
- Stronger institutional knowledge
- Better service delivery

Questions & Discussion

Thank You!