Town of Sturbridge – GIS Instructional Information

From the Town of Sturbridge homepage, select the GIS/Maps link.

"Click here to view the Online GIS" and Agree to the Disclaimer.

You will be directed to the main screen for the town GIS. You will be navigating around Sturbridge on ths screen. See below:
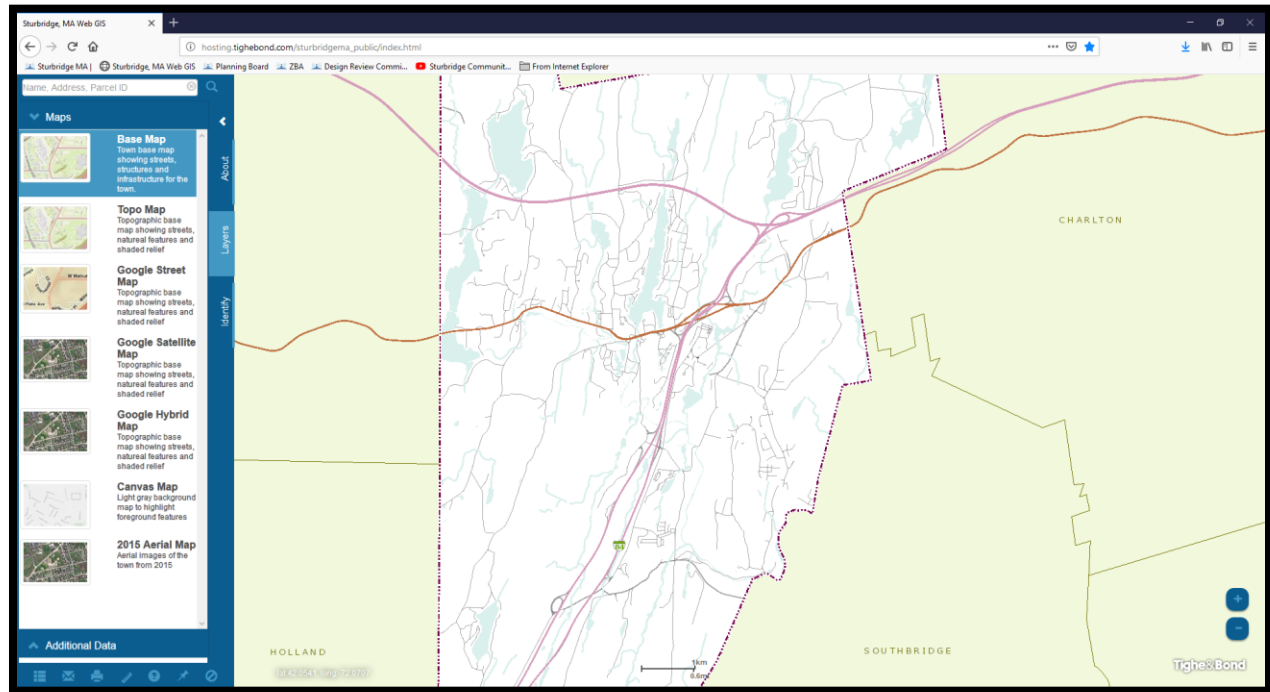

Figure 1: The main screen as seen when opening GIS viewer.

To start, type in the street address of the property you would like to zoom in on. We are going to use the Town Hall, 308 Main Street, as our example. (You can also zoom in using the blue +/- buttons on the screen, or by using the mouse.)

In the box where it says "Name, Address, Parcel ID" type the street address. We will enter "308 Main Street" and hit the search button or hit enter.

Note: you can also look up property by Last Name or by using the Street Name and scrolling through the list to find the correct address, or by using the Parcel ID if you know it. The quickest method is to use the street number and street address.
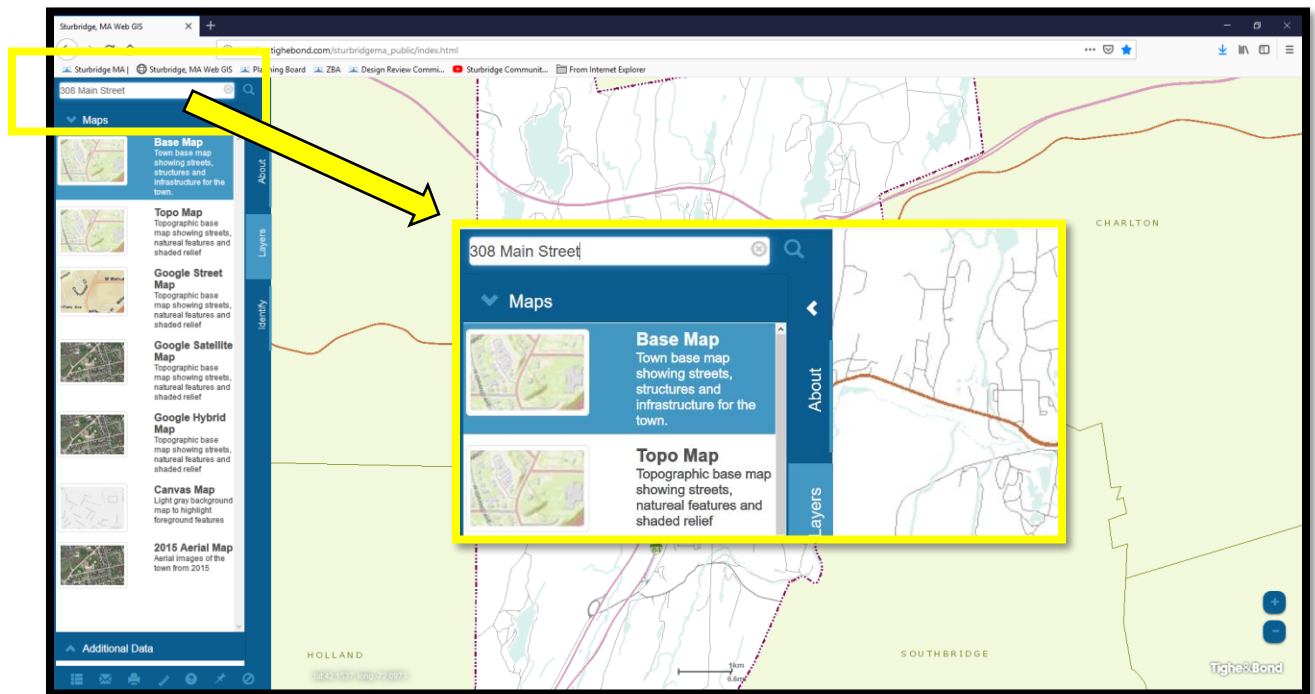
Figure 2: Type the address of the property you would like to view and hit search.

After putting in a specific address, GIS will zoom you to that property. The property information is viewed under "Parcel Details" in the left frame (See #1 below). If this information does not autopopulate, you can click the "View Details" link on the summary box (See #2 below) that appears automatically. This Summary will also appear when you click on an individual parcel.
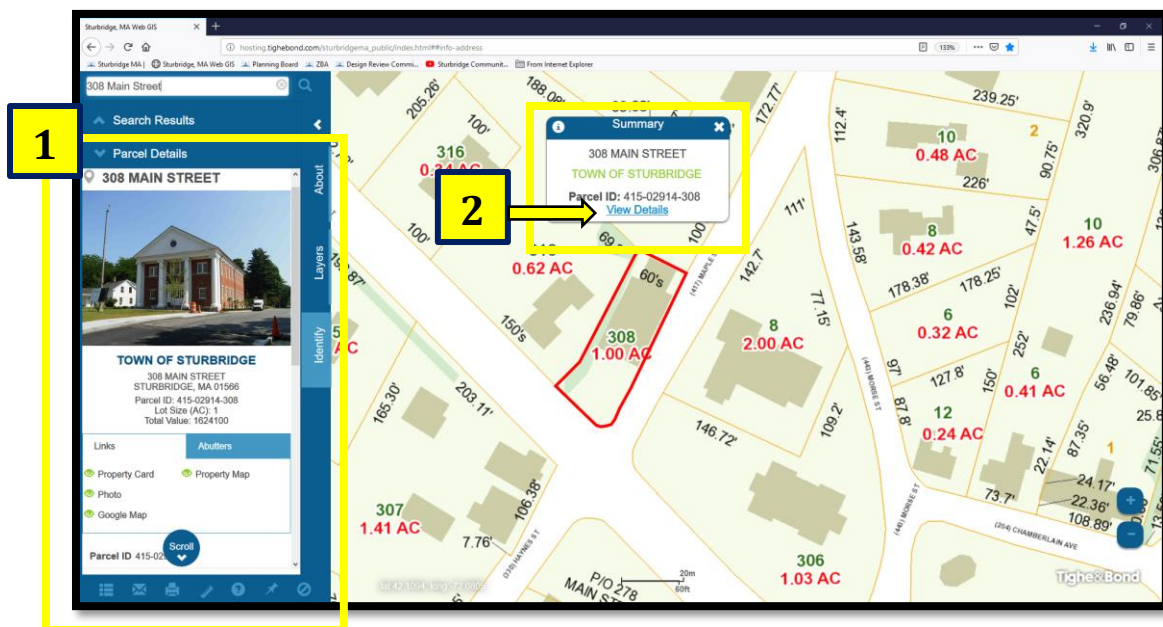

Figure 3: Parcel Details of a specific property, 308 Main Street is shown here.

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You have the option of choosing a different Base Map. Depending on what you are looking to see or learn, you may only need standard Base Map. Some of the Satellite images show less leaves on the trees than others, aiding in visibility. You can try different Maps to see which one works best for your needs.
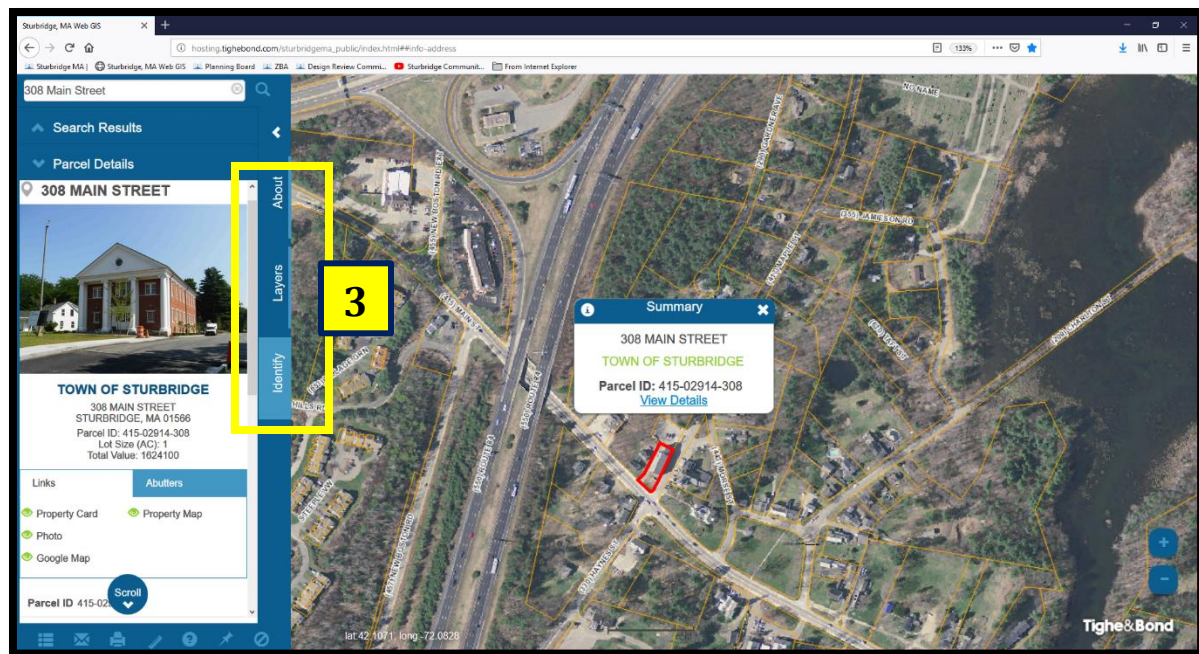

Figure 4: This is the image that you will be seeing after locating your property.

First, click on "Layers" in the area outlined by #3 above. By default, this will display the series of Base Maps you can select from. Scroll through the options shown under "Maps" as see below labeled #4.
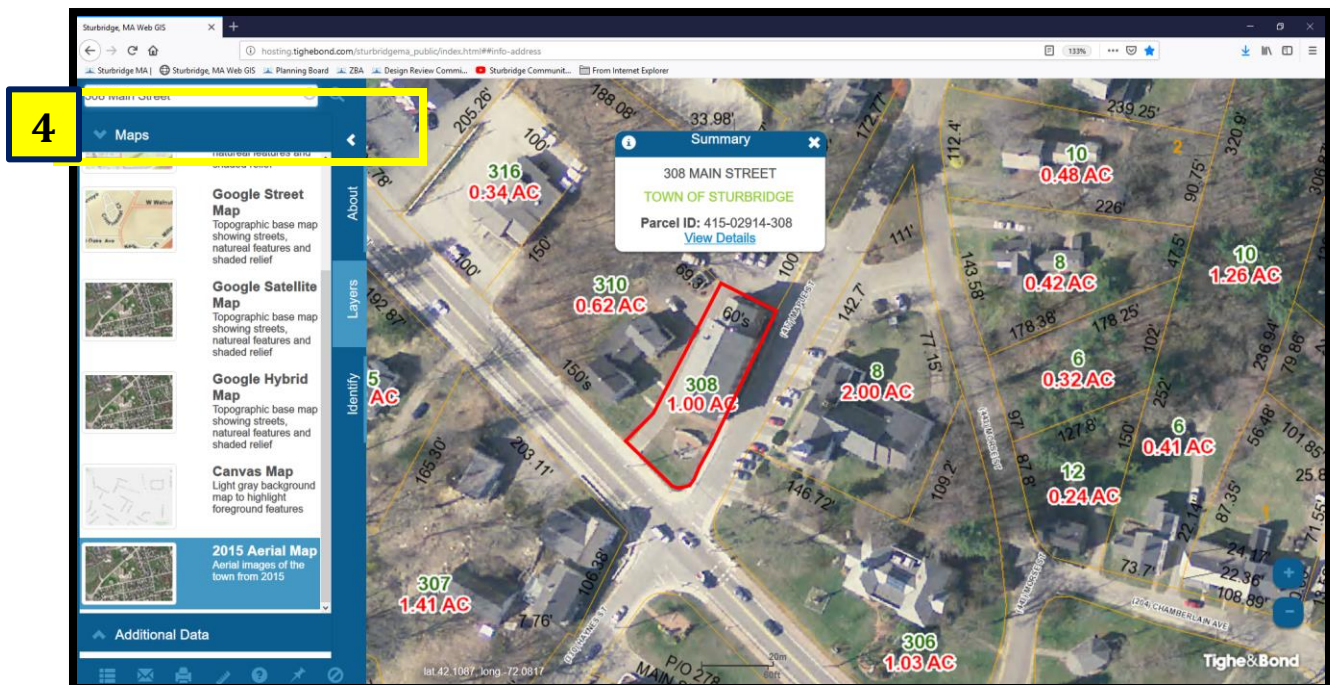

Figure 5: Select the base maps that best suits your needs. The 2015 Aerial Map shows leaf off images.

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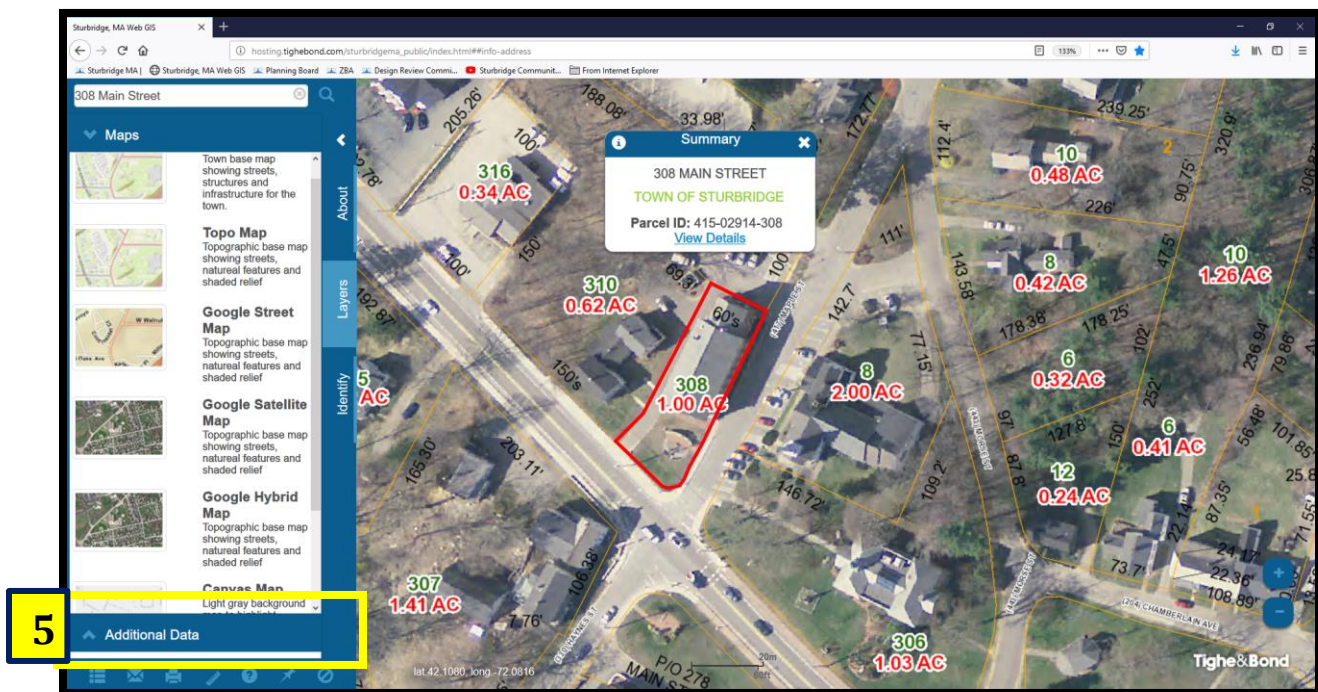Now take a look at the other options you can view in GIS. Click on "Additional Data" to expand it.

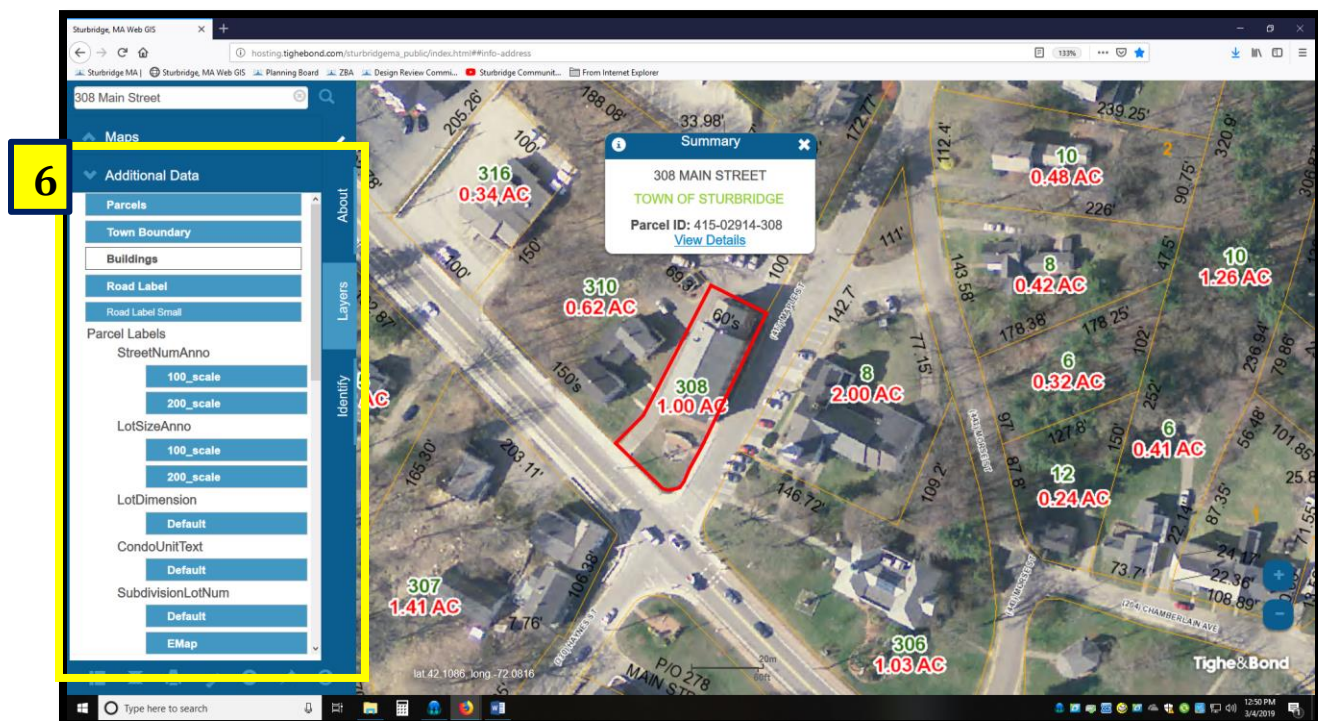*Figure 6: Additional Data shows a number of options regarding data that can be viewed.*

Figure 7: Additional Data expanded.

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If something is highlighted blue in the Additional Data list, it means the layer is on and therefore visible on your map. As shown highlighted in #6, by default this includes things such as parcel lines, road names, and lot dimensions.

Below in #7, we can see there is additional information you can turn on and off. You may need to scroll down the data frame to see all the options.
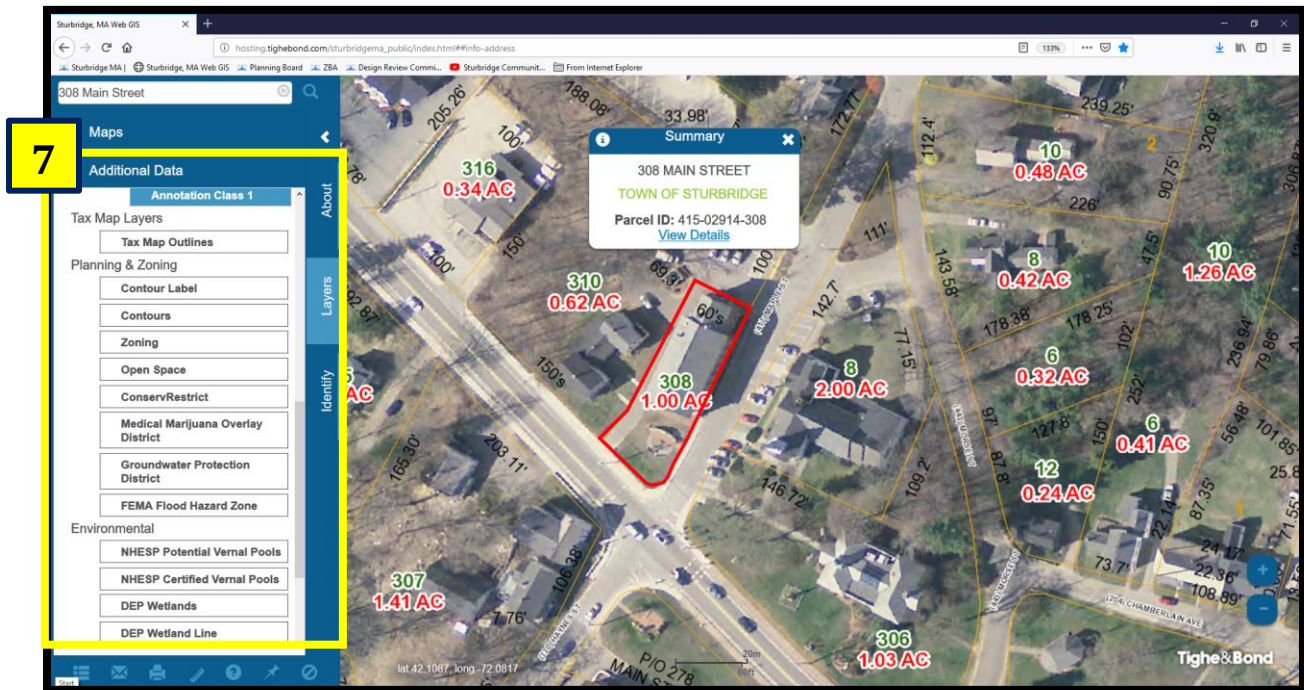

Figure 8: Showing more Additional Data

If you turn on a layer and do not see a change, try to zoom out. You may be turning on and off the layer, but if you are zoomed in on a single parcel, and are looking at (for example) "DEP Wetlands" there might not be any wetlands within your current view screen and thus not visible on the map. By zooming out, you widen your view and should be able to see what layer is being turned on or off.

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In #8, we have turned on the Zoning layer and you can see the difference with the new layer turned on. Near the bottom, if you click the little bulleted icon highlighted by #9, the map legend will appear. In our example below, #10 displays what your frame will look like after clicking the legend icon. Only the layers that are turned on will be displayed – in this example it shows the Zoning.
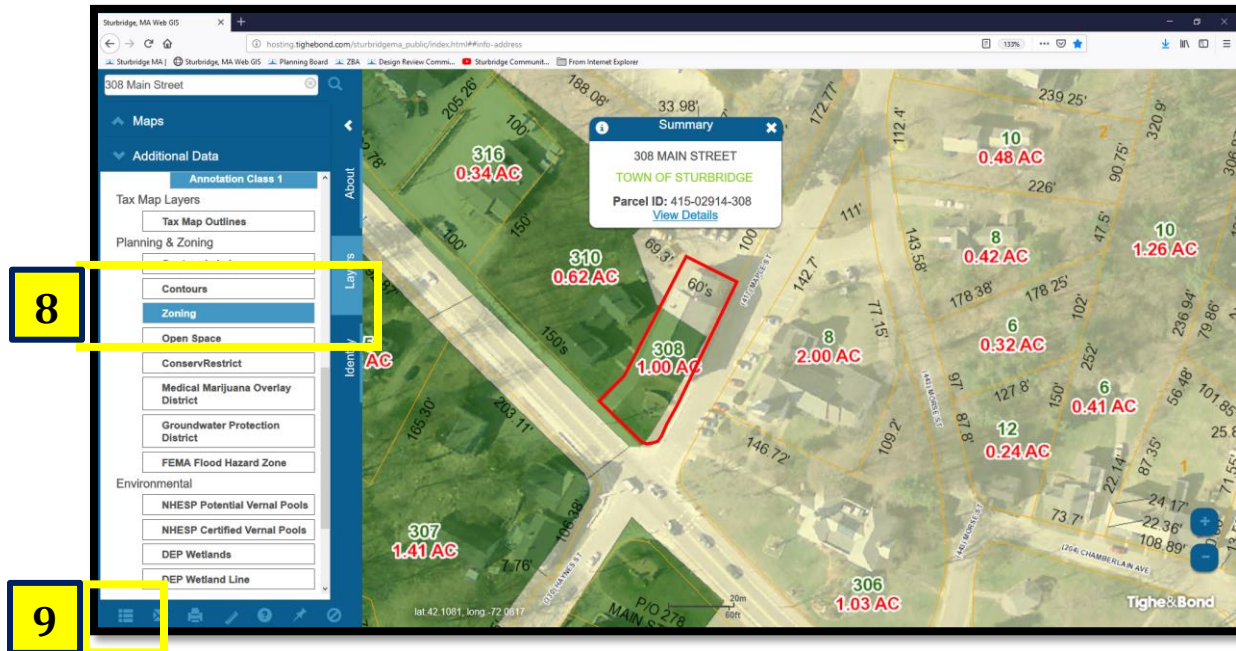

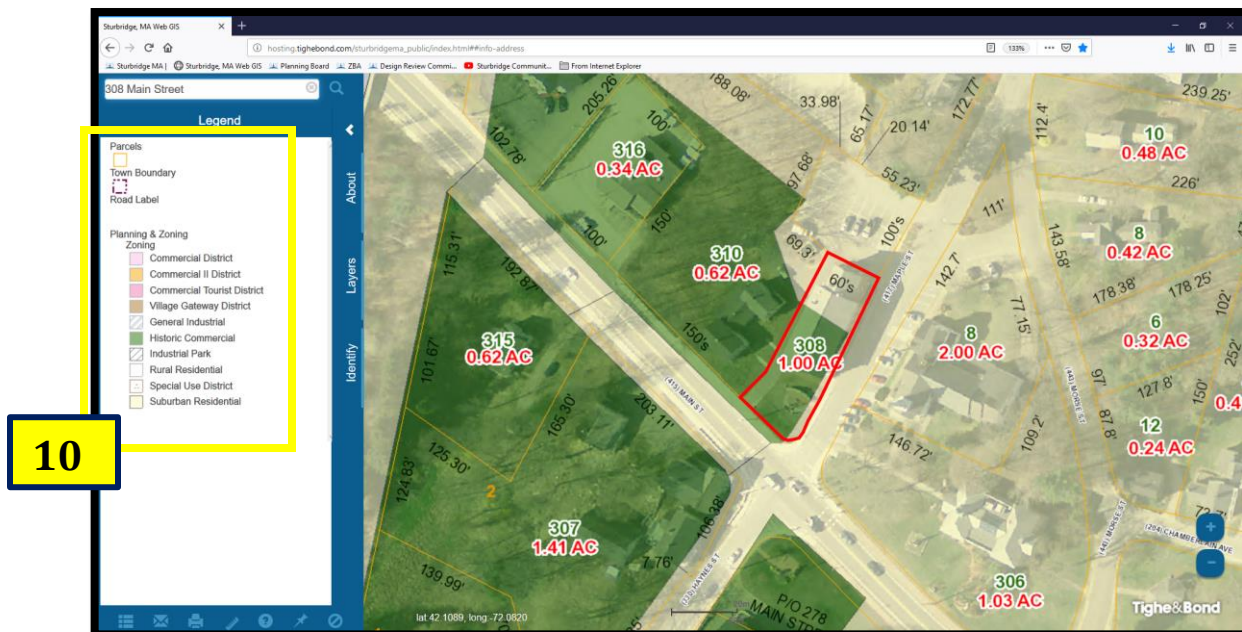*Figure 9: Showing Additional Data.*

Figure 10: Showing the Legend displayed while Zoning is turned on.

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One of the tools you can use in the online viewer is the Measure Tool. It can take some time to get used to, be careful you aren't measuring the same thing twice. When you click on the Measure icon, highlighted in #11, the "Measure" diagloue box will open (highlighted as #12). In the example, we used the cursor to click, extend the line, and double click to end and measure the line between 316 and 310 Main Street. It shows up as a red line as you use the tool. You can measure the length or area of something. Double click to end a measurement, and also use the clear button in between measurements to be sure you don't count something twice.

Note: as mentioned in the Disclaimer, these GIS maps are not land survey quality. As you can see below the length measurement of the line says the length is 147' and the property line length on the map is 150'.

Figure 11: Using the Measure tool can be a little tricky. Be sure to "clear" in between measurements. Close and re-open the tool when you are doubting your measurements.

Looking to print out a map? Use the icon buttons and choose Print (highlighted as #13 below). A dialogue box will open. You can add a title and choose a size. Follow the prompts to print. If the map isn't showing exactly what you wanted, you can Close the Print Map dialogue box, re-center or zoom to the correction and print again.
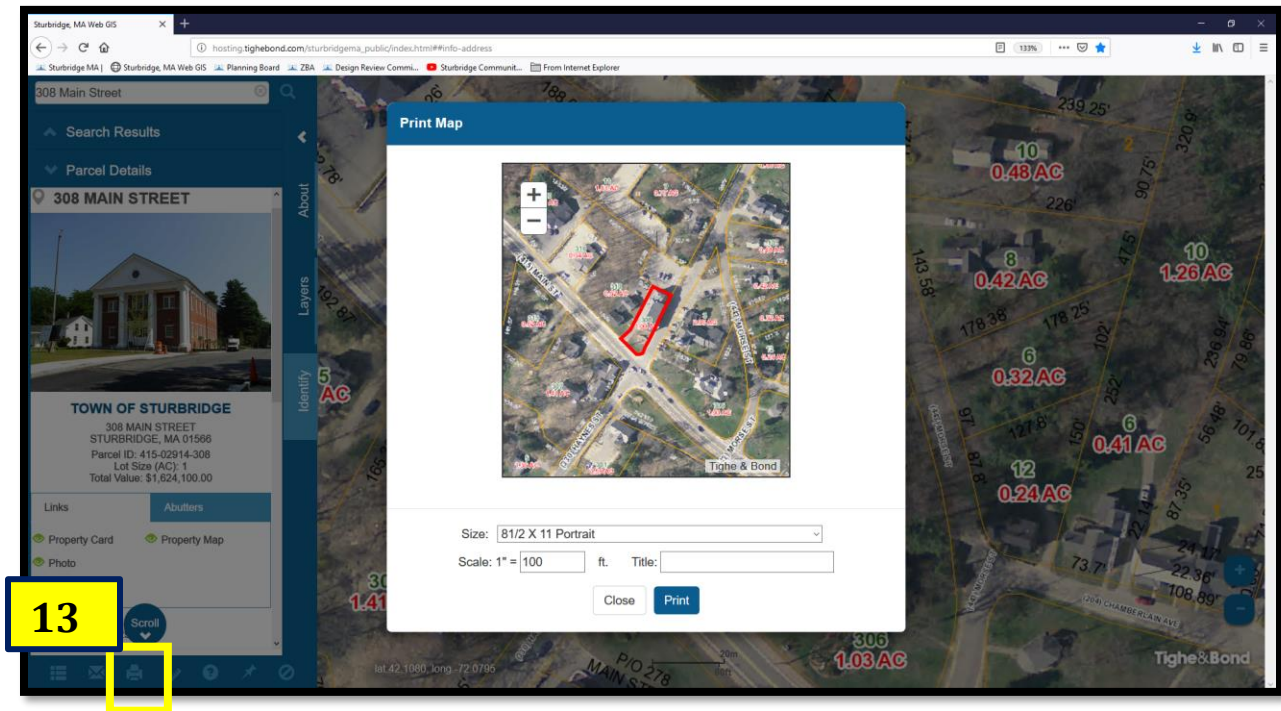

Figure 12: To print a map, use the Print icon button and follow the prompts to print.