Jose M. Torres, AICP

Geographic Information Systems and Community Planning

Professional Summary

AICP certified planner and geographer with a decade of experience in California community development. Work bridges municipal consulting, advocacy, and GIS analysis, with a focus on housing policy and hazard mitigation planning. Serves Spanish speaking communities and clients in their first language, working across the Central Coast and statewide.

Education

Auburn University *2014 to 2016*
Dual Master of Science in Geography and Master of Community Planning

Dongguk Royal University *2001 to 2005*
Master's Degree, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Chinese Herbology

University of California, Los Angeles *2001 to 2003*
Bachelor's Degree, Chinese Language and Literature

San Francisco State University *1996 to 1997*
Associate Degree, Spanish Literature

Professional Certifications

- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
- Paralegal Certificate
- Creating Maps with R
- Python Tutorial

Professional Experience

Senior Planner and GIS Specialist *March 2025 to Present*
4LEAF, Inc.

- Produces and manages building codes, land regulations, and construction ordinances; distributes permits and interprets zoning regulations for the public.
- Leads Spanish translation for marketing materials, community outreach, and engagement efforts.
- Develops mapping for the Napa Sonoma Collaborative Housing Connect tool, including AB 2334 density bonus eligible parcels, SB 4 religious institutions, and Transit Oriented Corridors.
- Conducts site inventory analysis for the 6th Cycle Housing Element, including site identification, capacity analysis, and infrastructure requirements.

Associate Planner, AICP *October 2023 to March 2025*
4LEAF, Inc.

- Provided plan review, zoning interpretation, and project entitlement support for client municipalities across California.

Housing Programs Coordinator (Interim) *June 2024 to February 2025*

City of Hollister, California (via 4LEAF, Inc.)

- Managed housing related grants, including application, administration, and reporting processes.
- Administered the First Time Homebuyer Program, providing final review of applications.
- Reviewed and evaluated affordable housing project proposals for alignment with city policies and housing goals.

Housing Advocate *April 2023 to October 2023*

LandWatch Monterey County

- Led advocacy for housing elements across Monterey County during the 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), promoting affordable and fair housing, zoning density alignment, and investment in underserved communities.
- Managed the LandWatch Public Data Viewer portal, providing RHNA site inventory data, administrative boundaries, land use and zoning information, transportation data, emergency management details, and demographic statistics.

Associate Planner *March 2022 to February 2023*

City of Seaside, California

- Administered the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and reviewed development applications.
- Developed a baseline GIS for Planning and Building Department permitting history covering 2013 to 2022.

Assistant Planner and GIS Specialist *March 2020 to February 2022*

City of Berkeley, Department of Public Works, Engineering Division

- Project Lead, Sidewalk 50/50 Program: developed an ESRI Field Maps application for sidewalk condition data collection; coordinated consultant GIS deliverables; defined data formatting requirements.
- Project Management Team, NEXGEN Enterprise Asset Management System: prepared feature class GIS layers for all Public Works divisions; assisted in user training and acceptance phase.
- Data Inventory Project Manager, Cyclomedia Street Imagery and Point Cloud Capture: served as consultant on due diligence regarding privacy concerns; led GIS implementation and merger to enterprise datasets.
- Assisted with Zonar Smart Fleet Management implementation, including GPS tracking software training for Zero Waste Division vehicles and weekly route reporting.

GIS Specialist and Regional Stewardship Manager *August 2018 to March 2020*

Georgia-Alabama Land Trust, Inc.

- Lead project manager rebuilding a geodatabase of conservation easements covering over 400,000 acres of working farms, forests, and wetlands.
- Developed a GIS model to identify parcel candidates for the Wetlands In Lieu Fee Mitigation program managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Georgia.
- Managed Chattahoochee River Region conservation easements, working with landowners to ensure compliance and scheduled land management activities.

CivicSpark Water Fellow (AmeriCorps) *August 2017 to May 2018*

City of Culver City, California

- Conducted research, planning, and community engagement for restoration of an urban creek, stormwater channel, and bicycle pedestrian pathway along a nine mile stretch of Ballona Creek.
- Used GIS to map parcel ownership and multiple agencies' maintenance jurisdictions; developed a three lens framework (Community, Environment, Mobility) and published findings.

- Designed and facilitated the principle meeting with over 50 stakeholders, forming the official Ballona Creek Task Force.

Academic and Teaching Experience

Global Geography Instructor *December 2016 to July 2017*
Auburn University

- Instructor of record for Global Geography 1010, teaching international students enrolled in the AU Global four year degree fast track program.
- Produced original lecture content to challenge students' understanding of world geography.

GIS Lab Manager and Graduate Teaching Assistant *August 2014 to December 2016*
Auburn University, College of Sciences and Mathematics

- Managed the GIS lab for all College of Sciences and Mathematics GIS courses, including data storage and distribution for semester long land use siting projects.
- Taught select lectures, held office hours, and assisted students on final projects.

Graduate Research Assistant *August 2014 to December 2016*
Auburn University, Department of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts

- Contributed to the Economic Development Plan for the City of Tuskegee. Used the 2009 Hazard Mitigation Plan to analyze and map county service sector assets, producing a new inventory and map of critical facilities and civic organizations to illustrate the social capital fabric of Macon County, Alabama.

Taichi Instructor *June 2015 to August 2015*
Rehabilitation Bio-Mechanics Lab, Auburn University

- Instructor of Taijiquan for patients with knee pain, supporting Dr. Wei Liu's research on gentle exercise interventions for individuals with disabilities.

Earlier Professional Experience

Bodhi Factory Clinic and Studio *January 2010 to July 2014*
Provided acupuncture therapy and Taichi instruction in Columbus, Georgia and Opelika, Alabama.

Instructor, New Roads School, Santa Monica, California *January 2006 to January 2007*
Taught Mandarin Chinese 101 and Tai Chi Chuan.

Office Manager, UCLA Labor Center *June 2003 to June 2004*
Managed office operations under supervisors Larry Frank and Victor Narro.

Selected Publications

- Emergency management and the final frontier: Preparing local communities for falling space debris.
- A Report from the ASLA 2017 Annual Meeting.
- Ballona Creek Restoration Feasibility Report. CivicSpark Fellowship, City of Culver City, 2018.

Technical Skills

- GIS and Spatial Analysis: ArcGIS Pro, ArcGIS Online, ESRI Field Maps, geodatabase management, spatial data modeling, enterprise GIS implementation.

- Programming and Data: Python, R (Creating Maps with R certified).
- Planning Practice: California Housing Element law, RHNA compliance, CEQA review, zoning interpretation, density bonus law (AB 2334), SB 4, SB 35, Permit Streamlining Act.
- Office Operations, union relations, logistics management.

Languages

- Spanish (native or bilingual proficiency)
- Mandarin Chinese (professional working proficiency)
- Japanese (elementary)
- Arabic and Armenian (beginner)

Professional Affiliations

- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
- Alumnus, William A. Anderson Fund, mentoring program for underrepresented doctoral scholars in hazard mitigation and disaster risk reduction.
- California Geographic Information Association