



Efficiently create and edit features in ArcMap

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Are you a town planner wanting to deliver a park design to stakeholders? A landscape architect proposing the repositioning of existing features in a park? Or are you a developer looking to show citizens how a green space can be transformed?

In this ArcMap editing tips and tricks, you'll be introduced to some of the top techniques you can use to create and edit features such as footpaths and vegetation, and learn other time-saving shortcuts to help you work smarter and more efficiently, including:

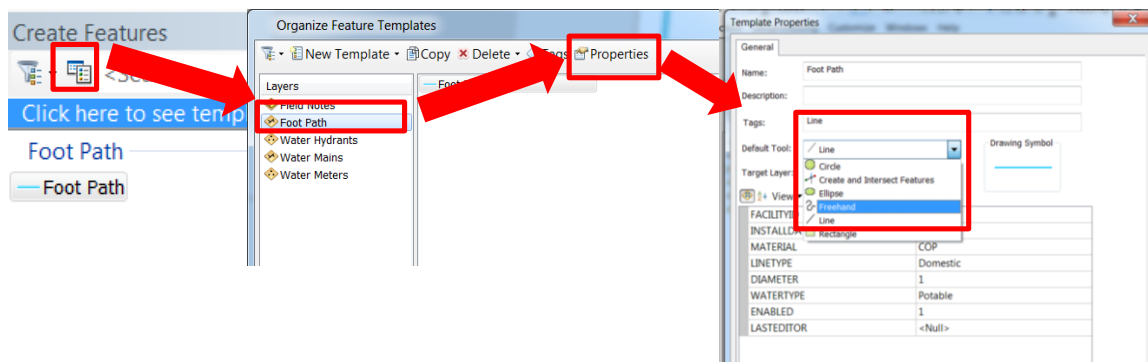
- Set feature template default construction tools
- Set feature template default attribute values
- Move the feature construction toolbar
- Trace edges when cutting polygons
- Change attributes for multiple features
- Sketch extended lines
- Update multiple features at once
- Align and edit coincident features

Set feature template default construction tools

Before you start creating features, open the template properties dialog box and check the default construction tool. You can set the default construction tool to automatically activate when you choose that feature template.

If you need to create many new trails or paths, set the default tool to 'freehand' – this will save you time by eliminating the extra click needed to change from the polygon tool. When using the freehand tool, you can also snap an existing feature by pressing the spacebar.

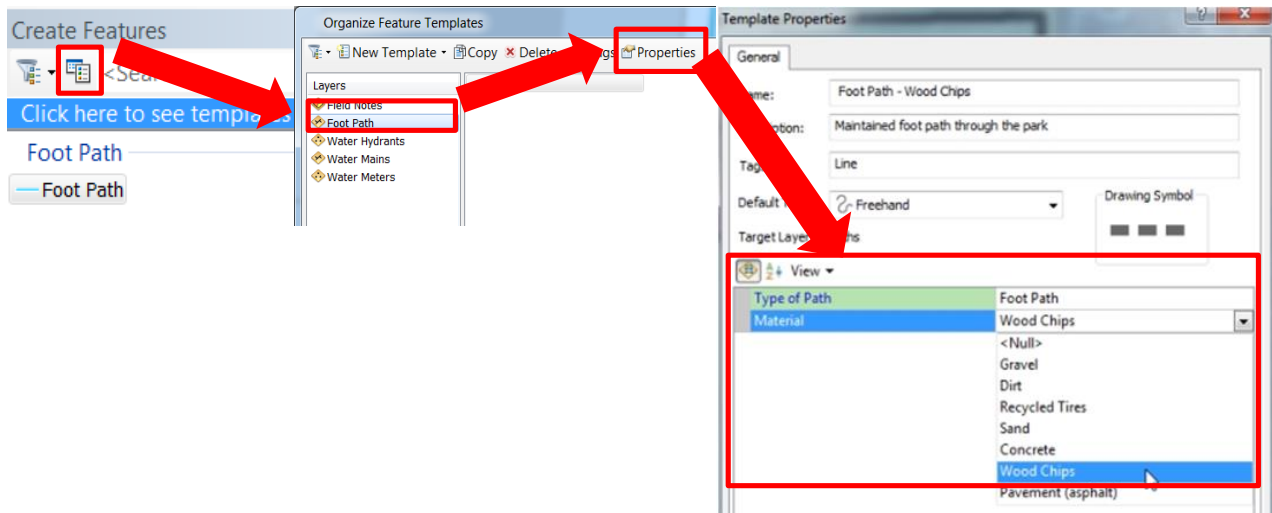
1. Start editing > organise feature template > select layer > properties
2. For default tools, select 'construction tools' from the drop down menu



Set feature template default attribute values

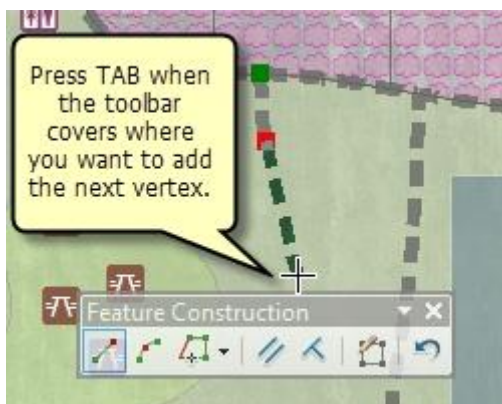
In the template properties dialog box, you can set the default attribute values that will be assigned to the new features created with the template. If your geodatabase has coded value domains, you can choose the attribute value from a dropdown list. Domains eliminate the need to repeatedly type the same values and ensure the attribute values are always valid and error-free.

1. Start editing > organise feature template > select layer > properties
2. For material, select 'wood chips' from the drop down menu.



Move the feature construction toolbar

The feature construction mini toolbar is handy because it allows you to change segment types in a sketch, create parallel or perpendicular segments, undo edits, and finish the sketch without moving the mouse to the main editor toolbar. Since the feature construction toolbar follows where you click on the map, it can sometimes end up covering where you want to add the next vertex. You can press the TAB key to flip the location of the toolbar so it is out of your way.



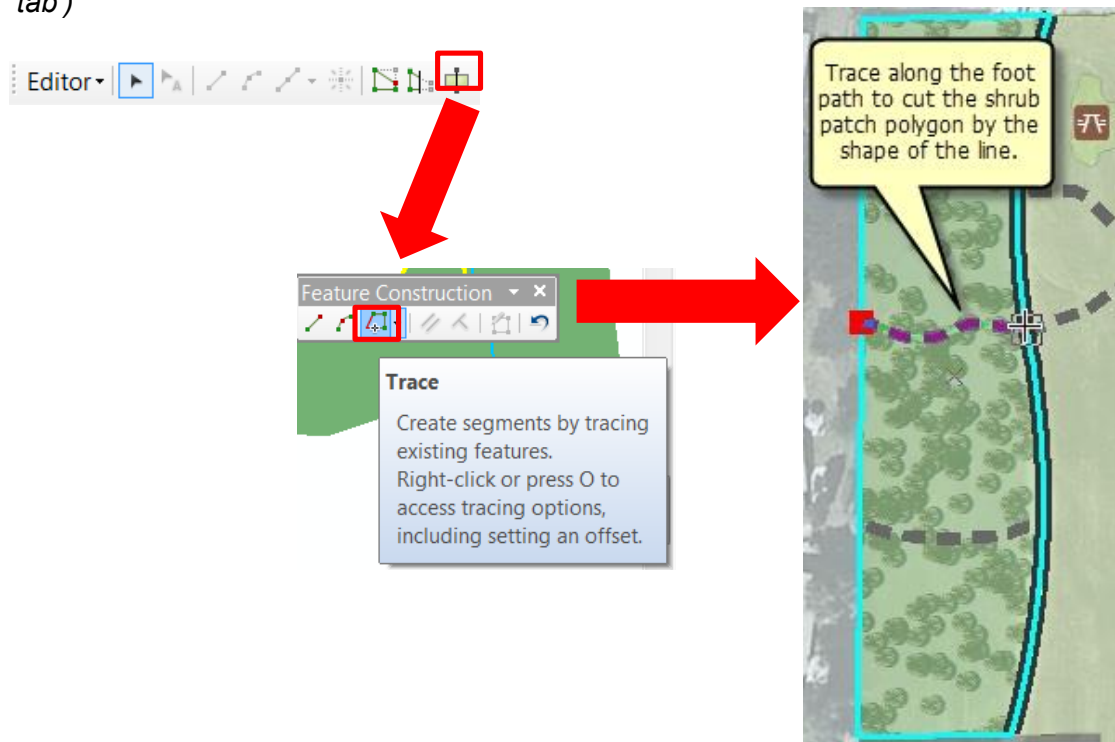
Trace edges when cutting polygons

If you want to split a large polygon into several different areas, you can use the trace edges tool when cutting the polygons. For example, your current park design is landscaped with shrubs along the entire western border, however, you want the area to be three different types of vegetation, each separated by a foot path.

You can draw features for the new path lines first so you can use them to split the large polygon. Then, select the polygon and click the cut polygons tool, change the construction method to 'trace' on the feature construction toolbar, and follow along the edge of the overlapping foot path feature. You need to make sure the trace goes all the way across the polygon so the cut is successful.

When you finish the sketch, the polygon is split and its edge exactly matches the shape of the path.

1. Start editing > draw the new path > select the polygon to split > cut polygon tool > trace (click 'tab')



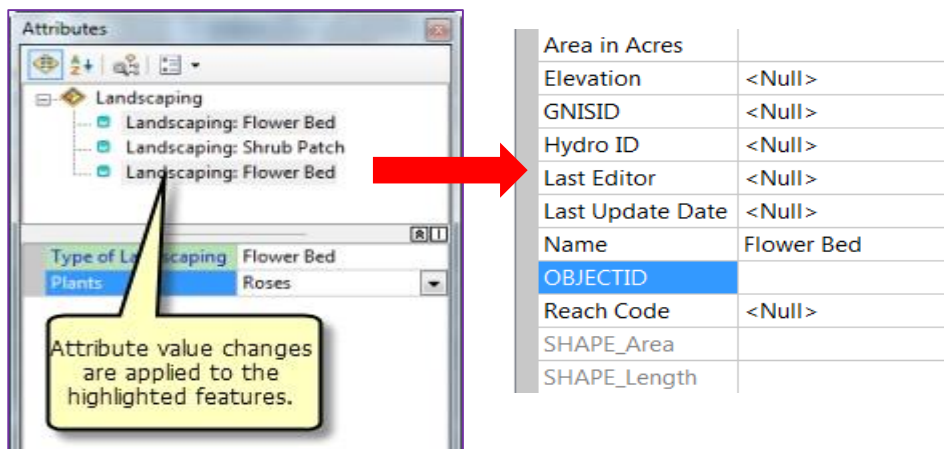
Another method to split the shrub patch polygon by the overlapping foot path line is to snap to the edge of the polygon, right-click directly over the footpath line, click 'replace sketch', and finish the sketch. Replace sketch pulls the shape of the underlying feature into the sketch used to cut the polygon.

Change attributes for multiple features

If you want to change the attribute for multiple features, rather than open the attribute table for each feature, you can use the attribute window. For example, you want to change the landscaping attribute from 'shrub patch' to 'flower bed'.

To update selected polygons, hold down 'ctrl' and click the feature entries (listed by display expression) at the top of the window. If you click the layer name, all selected features are updated. Clicking just one feature only updates that individual feature's values.

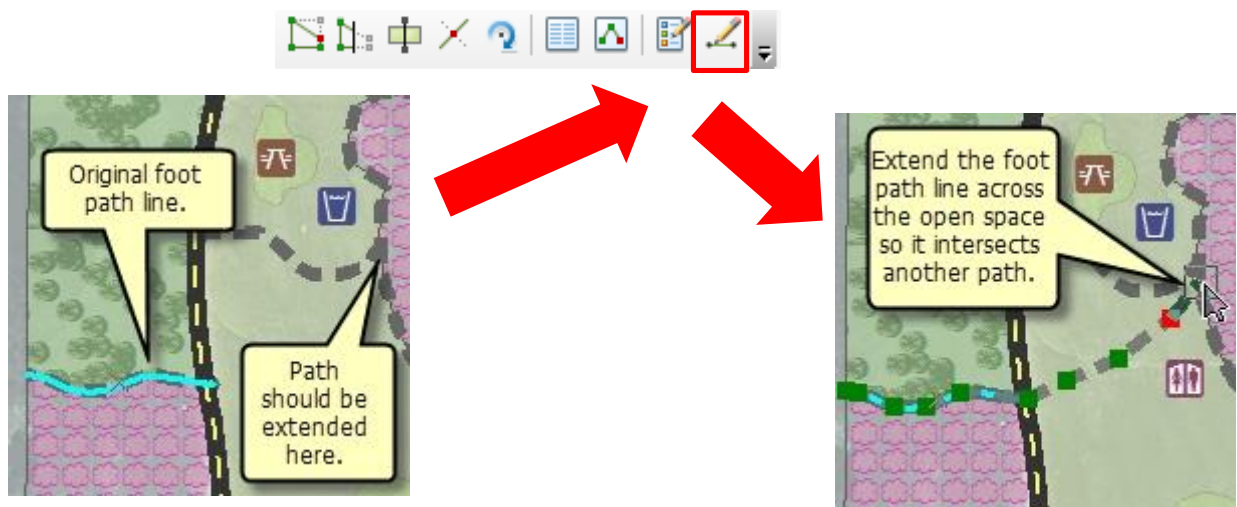
1. Select the polygons that require attribute update from attribute window > 'ctrl' to select features > edit the attribute



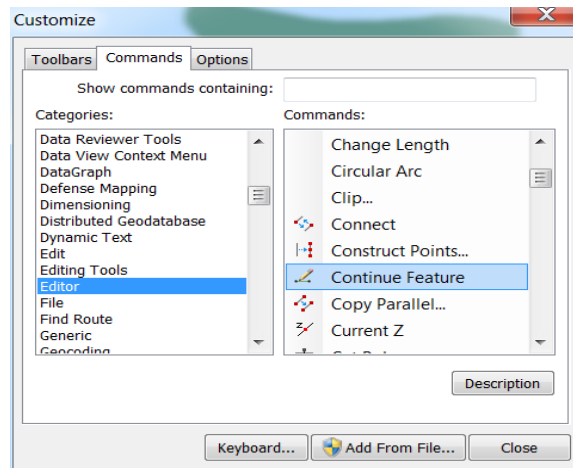
Sketch extended lines

You can use the continue feature tool to extend a line. For example, the footpath across the open space needs to be extended across the open space so it connects with another footpath.

1. Select feature to extend > continue feature > draw a sketch



Continue feature is available in all software versions from ArcGIS 10 Service Pack 2 onwards, but must be added to a toolbar from the customize dialog box because it is not on the default user interface.

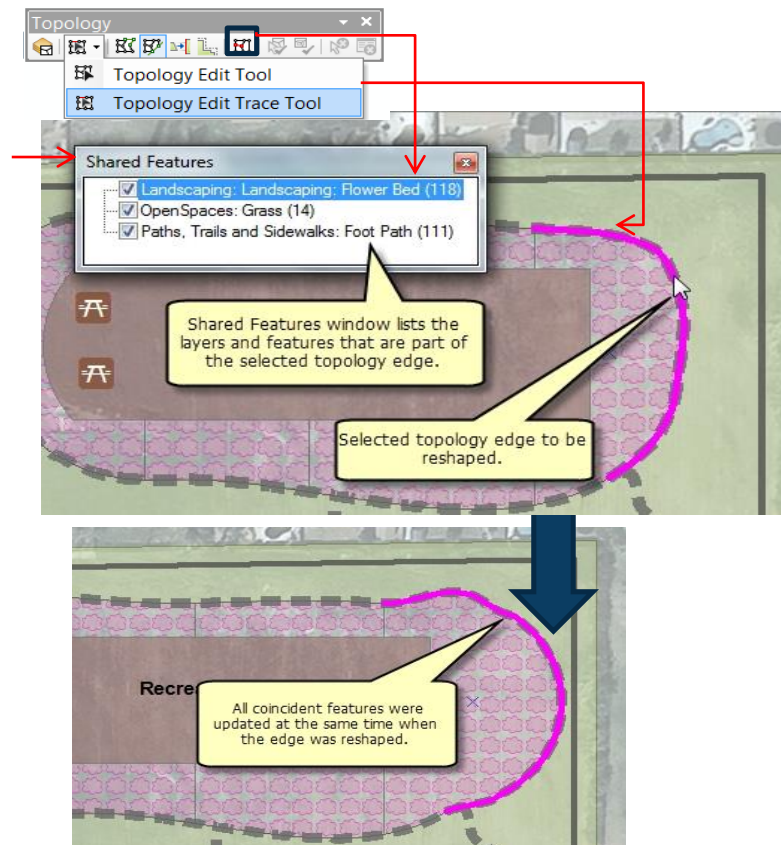


Update multiple features at once

You want to expand the area of the park. This edge is shared by flower bed polygons, a footpath line, and open space polygons. You can build a map topology to make edits to all these features at the same time, including moving edges, reshaping edges and modifying the vertices on the edges. You can select the shared edge with the topology edit tool and use the reshape edge tool to simultaneously update all the features sharing the common boundary.

1. Create map topology > topology edit > reshape edge tool

The shared features window lists which features are part of the selected edge. By default, all shared features are updated when an edge is modified. You can exclude features from edits by unchecking the boxes next to the feature. Once you reshape the edge, the features are still coincident.



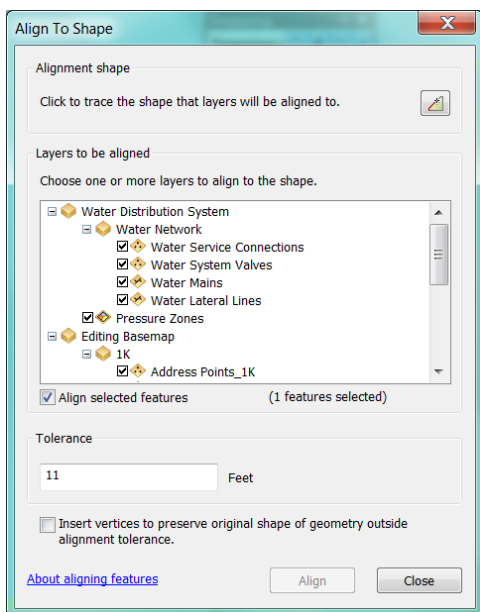
If you attempt to perform this edit with the reshape feature tool on the editor toolbar, only one feature is updated at a time, and gaps and overlaps will form among features. With 'reshape edge', they are all modified together. Be sure to use the topology editing tools when making edits to features that share edges.

Align and edit coincident features

'Align edge' in the topology toolbar provides a quick way to match one edge to another edge by using topology. It works best for fixing gaps between polygons and making long edges match among features.

'Align to shape' in the advanced editing toolbar adjusts features in certain layers to a line you trace along an existing feature. Align to shape is a good way to update multiple layers when you want some control over the parameters used in the alignment.

1. Select layer > align to shape  on the advanced editing toolbar.



1. Map topology > align edge 