



Passaic Valley Water Commission

The trickle-down effect: How PVWC built long-term community trust through enhanced access to services

OVERVIEW

Passaic Valley Water Commission (PVWC) recognized that its digital experience was no longer meeting the needs of its customers or internal teams. The website had become outdated and difficult to maintain, limiting the organization's ability to serve the public effectively. Its new platform, powered by Granicus' Service Cloud, features a modern website, digital forms and workflows, and transparent project hubs that optimize how PVWC serves and engages its 800,000 customers — granting easier access to services, real-time critical updates, and more inclusive digital engagement.

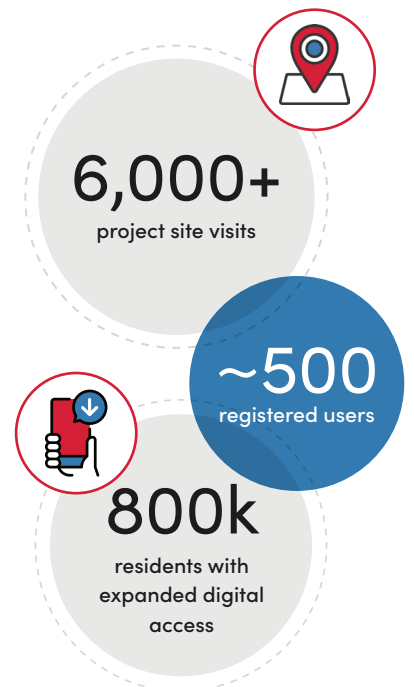
SITUATION | "WE KNEW WE COULD DO BETTER"

PVWC's legacy website navigation made it challenging for citizens to access critical services like billing or information about service disruptions and infrastructure projects. Content had become outdated, and the team lacked the ability to make website updates easily.

Leadership prioritized a shift toward accessibility and stronger citizen engagement. "People would complain that there were just too many drop-down options — if they didn't know exactly where they were going, they struggled to use the site," she said. This struggle extended to PVWC's inability to reach individuals with essential service updates, meaning they risked the chance of residents being uninformed about water outages.

MUST HAVE SOLUTIONS

Service Cloud



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"This entire digital experience has been really beneficial. And when you talk about the future, I think it's limitless in how we continue to communicate across the board on all projects."

Marisah L. Potkalesky | Senior Technician | Management Information Systems | Passaic Valley Water Commission



It was evident that PVWC needed a modern platform that could simplify services while supporting a large and diverse population. ““We have always been committed to transparent and informative communications with the public, but we knew we could do better,” said Potkalesky.

SOLUTION | AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A MORE INVOLVED AND INFORMED PUBLIC

PVWC implemented a modern digital platform with Service Cloud — including a redesigned website, dedicated project hub, and digital forms — with a key priority to enable distributed ownership of content.

“Something we really liked about Granicus was that specific users could edit their parts of the website,” said Potkalesky. “We all really like being able to build out project pages, inform our customers, and get them more involved.”

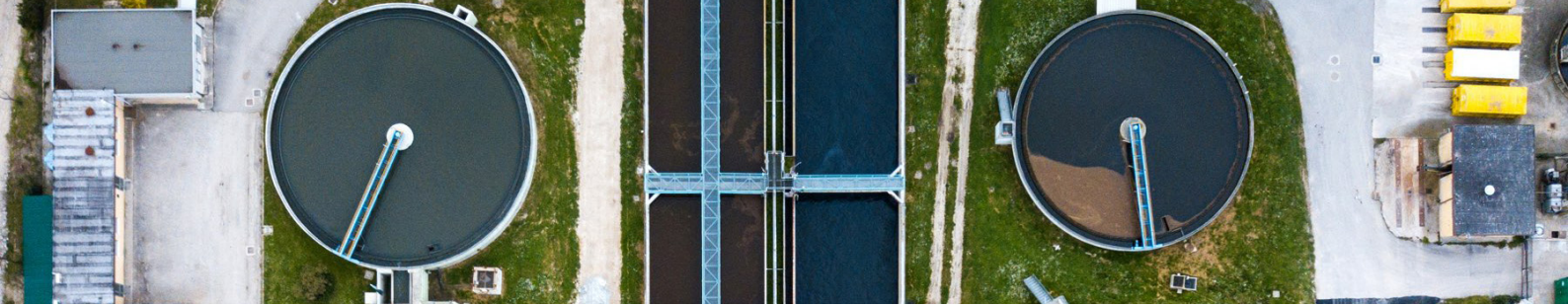
The new platform introduced structured ways to expand communication with the public. PVWC built standardized project pages to centralize information about infrastructure and engineering work as the commission ramps up its five-year, \$809 million capital plan. Pages include enhanced features like interactive maps and allow residents to ask questions and subscribe to project updates. The project pages also serve as a natural home for updates on essential programs like lead service line replacements or hydrant flushing.



TRENDWATCH: The rise of the unified digital front door

Government websites are increasingly becoming centralized service hubs — one place to pay bills, find answers, request services, follow project updates, and receive urgent information. The [2026 State of Digital Government Report](#) found that agencies with integrated service platforms saw digital adoption for key services reach 62%, with top performers exceeding 78%.

Critically, the platform also enabled real-time communication during emergencies and ongoing operations. Emergency alert features significantly improved PVWC’s responsiveness, the public’s access to information, and peace of mind for all parties, with Potkalesky saying, “The emergency banner is so easy to put up and take down. In the past, I would have a mini panic attack about how I had to do it. I don’t feel that pressure anymore.”



PVWC's website will never again be static, for it's now a living, evolving resource. **"It's a live website,"** said Potkalesky. **"I don't think it's ever really the same more than two or three days in a row."**

RESULTS | MORE ACCESS FOR CITIZENS, LESS STRESS FOR STAFF

PVWC's total digital transformation is already delivering measurable impact across its service area. Thousands of residents are now engaging online, with more than 6,000 visits to project engagement pages and nearly 500 registered participants. Citizens benefit from a more streamlined experience — including simplified billing, expanded payment options, and multilingual and mobile-friendly capabilities.

The platform has proven especially valuable during high-pressure situations. During a major 42-inch water main break that left approximately 100,000 residents without water for several days, PVWC was able to issue frequent, time-sensitive updates to the public. The team could communicate quickly and consistently, publishing "multiple updates multiple times a day" as conditions evolved. Previously, this level of responsiveness would have been difficult to manage, as Potkalesky noted: "If we didn't have Granicus, it would've added additional time and stress."



REALITY CHECK: Proactive communication is critical during service disruptions

According to the [2026 State of Digital Government Report](#), agencies without modernized digital service infrastructure reported a 40% increase in help-desk call volume as residents turn to manual channels for information and support. When service conditions change quickly, the right digital foundation enables teams to share updates faster, reducing staff pressure and keeping residents informed.

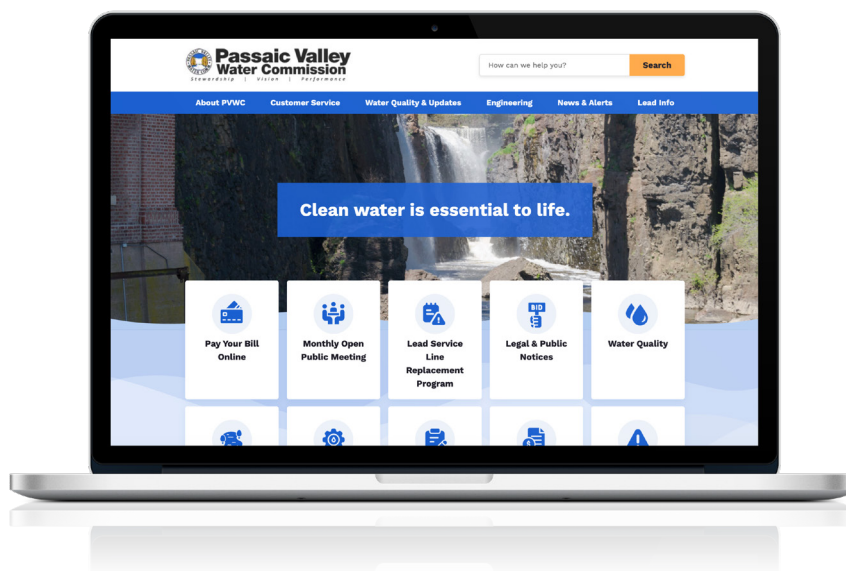
This increased transparency and accessibility is building long-term trust with its community. **"They have 24/7 access to the information they want, and very easy access to customer service for more information ... that really builds trust,"** said Lisa Iurato, a consultant for Passaic Valley Water Commission.



Internally, teams can now update content more quickly and independently, reducing reliance on IT and increasing overall organizational agility. **“The people in the organization love it,”** said Potkalesky. **“It really helps PVWC work with the community that we serve. This entire digital experience has been really beneficial. And when you talk about the future, I think it’s limitless in how we continue to communicate across the board on all projects.”**

Most recently, Potkalesky says that PVWC plans to lean on Granicus’ expertise to improve its reach. “When we went live with Sentiment & Feedback — even though we didn’t do a large push to social media or flyers or anything — we definitely saw an upward trend. I’m excited to meet with our Granicus partner for our strategic review and to get a plan for the next three to six months and then see how much more it’s going to grow.”

*This story highlights the hard work and innovation that earned Passaic Valley Water Commission recognition as a winner in the 15th Annual **Granicus Digital Government Awards**, honoring exceptional achievements in digital government.*



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