

## West Palm Beach

Sunny days ahead: How West Palm Beach's online presence and crisis comms shine with Service Cloud

1.3M

active website users  
in the past year

94.8

Quality  
Assurance score

20%

of PDFs archived to  
improve ADA compliance

10%

YoY email  
subscriber growth

### OVERVIEW

The City of West Palm Beach set out to elevate its digital presence with a modern website that truly serves its community — clear, accessible, and built around how residents actually search for information. By adopting Service Cloud, the city replaced a difficult-to-maintain system with a connected, mobile-responsive platform that strengthens accessibility, emphasizes emergency preparedness, streamlines processes for staff, and ensures residents can easily navigate services across any device. The result is a user-centered digital front door that reflects West Palm Beach's commitment to transparency, innovation, and high-quality service delivery.

### SITUATION | USER-UNFRIENDLY

West Palm Beach faced significant hurdles with its previous website, most of them stemming from the fact that it was not user-friendly. Navigation difficulties for residents on the front end and operational bottlenecks for staff on the back end created pain points, as the website:

- ✔ **Relied on a single individual for edits**, which complicated and delayed the ability to keep up with real-time updates — especially during crisis.
- ✔ **Lacked user-friendly design or proper ADA compliance**, compromising resident accessibility to digital services.
- ✔ **Limited emergency communication capabilities**; during crises, staff could only display a banner, which was insufficient for comprehensive safety messaging.
- ✔ **Potential IT security concerns** around the use of various forms solutions without robust data controls.

### MUST HAVE GRANICUS SOLUTION

Service Cloud

- Websites & CMS
- Forms & Workflow
- Communications

“We had a lot of storms in the past, but now we have sunny days. That's how we look at Service Cloud. It has been the ‘parting of the clouds’ we needed; we've been able to get a lot of information and get things done.”

— Peter Dobens, Webmaster,  
West Palm Beach



## SOLUTION | POWERFULLY PREPARED

West Palm Beach launched the new WPB.org using Websites & CMS. “We upgraded to [Service Cloud], and it’s been much easier to work with,” said Peter Dobens, webmaster for West Palm Beach. “It’s easier to teach people how to use it because it’s more user-friendly.”

**The new site captures the vibrancy of West Palm Beach through a digital experience that feels as dynamic as the city itself – serving as a central hub for services, information, and real-time communication.**

A seamless connection between public-facing tools and internal city operations was established in a big way. The website was built around resident needs, incorporating user data insights to provide a better digital experience. The site now boasts an accessible design with multilingual support and simplified navigation, so residents can easily access the services and information they need.

Service Cloud’s additional capabilities helped to streamline and elevate the city’s services even further. Granicus’ Forms & Workflow (OpenForms) solution replaced a scattering of other tools – including Google Forms – to enhance security and simplify data collection. The Communications (govDelivery) capability was integrated to provide a unified email distribution system.

The West Palm Beach team also received a dedicated Granicus Experience Partner to help make the most of its powerful stack of government technology, something Dobens considers a gamechanger.



**“In the past, I would send in an inquiry, and it may be two weeks before I hear back ... it’s now 2 hours,”** said Dobens. **“[Our Experience Partner] is extremely responsive and has just been phenomenal helping us. If she doesn’t know the answer, she will get it and get back to us; she’s not scared to pick up the phone.”**

With the help of their Experience Partner, the city developed a specialized emergency homepage to address the need for easily accessible crisis communication. Staff can now activate and update this dedicated emergency hub to completely replace the standard interface with critical hurricane information, evacuation routes, and shelter locations. This forward-thinking initiative from West Palm Beach is now being adopted by other Florida cities as well.



“We’re now all prepared, which is something that is essential in Florida,” said Dobens. “Our whole front page will change to everything hurricane related, whereas with [the previous website], the most we could do is put up a banner.”

## RESULTS | TRUE STRENGTH COMES FROM TRANSPARENCY

The new website delivers improvements in both internal operations and public engagement. Website analytics revealed a consistent 5–6% increase in traffic following the launch, with an incredible 1.3 million active users in the past year.

With compliance front and center, the new design ensures all residents can access vital information. Accessibility improved significantly, with the website earning a 94.8 Quality Assurance Score – 19 points above the government industry benchmark. Dobens credits the CMS for making digital accessibility easier, with features that proactively flag potential issues. As the city tackled PDF accessibility, Dobens was able to quickly identify more than 3,000 PDFs on the website through the CMS, and he’s now working across departments to remove or remediate non-compliant documents.

**New self-service options using Forms & Workflow reduce the need for residents to call or come into city hall. Whether its police recruitment events, mayoral program applications, complex building and planning forms, or simply routing general inquiries to the right department – city staff have embraced the powerful new tool that streamlined processes and keeps data more secure.**

According to West Palm Beach’s staff, the website’s true strength lies in its thoughtful structure that plays a role in increased transparency. Users now easily navigate permitting, utilities, public safety resources, records, and job applications – all through clear pathways that reduce friction and improve efficiency. Public meetings, budgets, ordinances, and performance documents are all readily accessible, leading to boosted public trust and satisfaction.

The story doesn’t end here for West Palm Beach. The city is constantly looking to improve the experience for its residents. “I’m happy with the website, and now we’re getting set for another evolution,” said Dobens. That evolution includes continued digital innovation as the city prepares to roll out Government Experience Agent (GXA) – Granicus’ AI-powered, government-tuned digital agent – to further enhance resident access to city services and information. For the City of West Palm Beach, Service Cloud provides a living platform to continuously evolve to meet the needs of its community.