



## City of Port St. Lucie

### Port St. Lucie's Website of the Year: An ever-evolving site built for real people

#### OVERVIEW

Port St. Lucie, Florida, sought to refurbish the city's online experience to better serve its fast-growing population. By pairing a major citywide rebrand with a full website overhaul, the city's communications team used Granicus Websites & CMS (OpenCities) to create a platform designed for how real people search, ask questions, and access city services. Their efforts in refining design, streamlining navigation, and reducing content resulted in a modern digital front door that supports the population growth, reflects Port St. Lucie's unique identity, and continuously evolves based on real resident feedback.

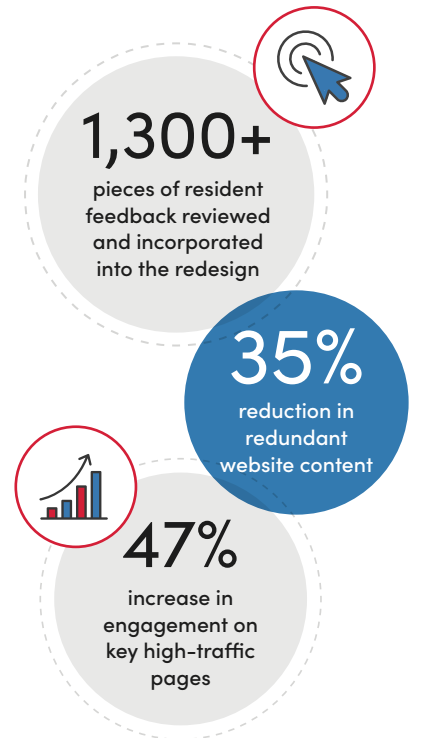
#### SITUATION | A GLOWING IDENTITY FOR A GROWING COMMUNITY

When Communications Director Sarah Prohaska joined the team in 2016, the website was difficult to use and lacked a clear brand identity. "Navigation was confusing; important content was buried, and departments had independently created pages that led to clutter," she explained.

Before adopting Granicus, Port St. Lucie relied on a fully in-house, custom-built website that lacked a modern content management system (CMS). The site was originally managed by an intern-turned-webmaster, and departments had direct editing access – which led to inconsistent content and a "scroll-fest" homepage overloaded with buttons.

#### MUST HAVE SOLUTIONS

Websites & CMS



**We're trying to make it as easy as possible for people to use the website to get the information they need. With almost 60,000 people having moved here over the course of a five-year period, being able to provide relevant information to them as quickly as possible is always our goal ... and I think that we've accomplished that."**

Scott Samples | Strategic Communications Manager | Port St. Lucie



The community was growing fast, yet residents often didn't know who the city was — its identity, happenings, or services. This rapid growth brought a surge in demand for user-friendly digital services.

In 2017, the city developed a new website with Granicus, focused on a scaled back homepage that emphasized search. However, the way residents used the website and sought information continued to evolve, and the minimalist homepage didn't allow the flexibility for the city to make updates and promote important information. After several years, it was time for a change to ensure the website continued to serve its purpose as an essential resource for residents.

**“Year after year [in our community survey], we ask people where they get their city information,”** said Prohaska. **“Consistently, website is number one, so we knew it was really important to make sure that we kept it relevant and easy to use.”**

## SOLUTION | REDESIGN ROOTED IN RESIDENT INPUT

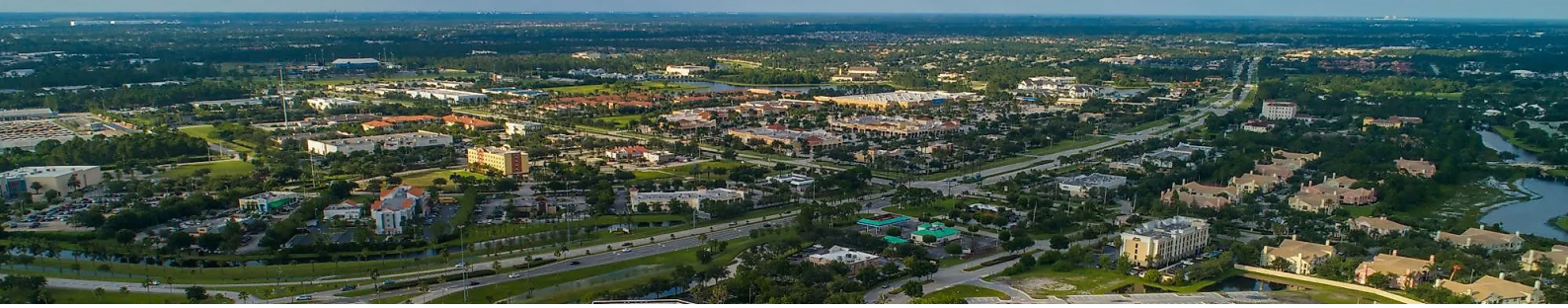
The city worked with Granicus to build a new website in tandem with the launch of its first-ever brand identity. The communications team conducted extensive departmental audits to clean up more than 600 pages before migration — incorporating more than 1,300 pieces of resident feedback to shape the new navigation and content structure.

Using this feedback, the homepage was designed to balance visual storytelling with clear pathways to essential services. It adopted a plain-language approach that made information more accessible for everyday users, while centralized content management ensured consistency and prevented clutter. Frequent refreshes — especially on homepage imagery — now help the city showcase its natural beauty and identity, front and center.

The city also created dedicated sub-sites for MIDFLORIDA Event Center, The Saints Golf Course, and the Port St. Lucie Police Department — providing more tailored experiences for specific audiences.



**“The overarching goal was to have a separate consumer experience, rather than having them navigate through the city site,”** said Scott Samples, Port St. Lucie's strategic communications manager. **“Having a dedicated place helped from a consumer perspective, both in terms of ease of navigation and in strategically reaching audiences in the most effective way they want to be reached.”**



## RESULTS | “USABLE, BEAUTIFUL, FOCUSED” AND EVER-EVOLVING

The new website now reflects Port St. Lucie’s identity and meets community expectations for being usable, beautiful, and resident-focused. **The site dramatically improved user experience, boasting the following award-winning results:**

- ✓ **Engagement with high-value pages increased 47%**, thanks to improved layout and navigation.
- ✓ **Redundant content decreased by 35%**, enabling cleaner search results and simpler pathways.
- ✓ **Departments now collaborate more effectively**, with streamlined workflows and a shared commitment to plain-language communication.
- ✓ **City Council, staff, and residents have all responded positively** to the site’s clean design and ease of use.

To further its efforts in public service, feedback prompts were adopted on every page, allowing the team to continue learning long after launch day. **“Getting feedback has allowed us to see how we can be better and more effective, which is the whole purpose,”** said Samples. **“It also helps our webmaster develop better content or refine where it’s placed. All departments can now think about the end user, rather than just pushing out information.”**

Today, the team continually reviews feedback to keep the website current and aligned with resident needs. They are also exploring enhancements like an AI-powered digital agent to continue future-proofing the site. The entirety of this prominent project, along with the dedication to constant improvements, earned Port St. Lucie the Granicus Digital Government Award for “Website of the Year.”

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

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