VERMONT
AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION

Rapid Process Modernization During an Emergency Response

PROJECT TITLE
Rapid Process Modernization During an Emergency Response
STUDY TIMELINE
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KEYWORDS
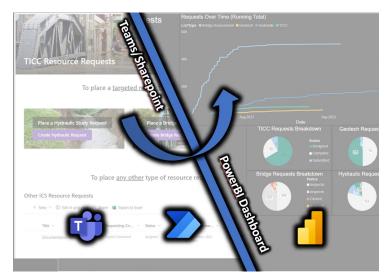Microsoft, Innovation,
Process Automation

FUNDING
N/A

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More information about the VTrans Research Program, including additional Fact Sheets, can be found at:
http://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/research

Introduction or Problem Statement

Following a 100-year flood event, how do you efficiently manage 100+ requests per day for, emergency bridge inspections, geotechnical surveys, hydraulic studies, temporary bridges and more? This impromptu project set about to tackle this very problem with a "we need it done yesterday" timeline, necessitating out of the box thinking, objective and direct decision making, and iterative adaptation from all stakeholders.

Methodology or Action Taken

The existing process for managing resource requests relied on a generic PDF fillable form that was to be emailed to a logistics team for fulfillment. For several reasons, this was not ideal. The two standout issues with this approach were insufficient information on a one size fits all form, and an emailed PDF is susceptible to being lost inside of one person's Inbox.

To address this, we rapidly created Teams/SharePoint Lists for each type of request and created automations in Power Automate to notify stakeholder of updates to their requests, notify logistics of new or pending requests and we are able to provide a comprehensive situational awareness through the use of connecting these Lists to a Power BI dashboard.

Conclusions or Next Steps

With command structure mandating ICS staff to utilize this new solution, it was fully implemented in a matter of hours. During the After-Action Review, this solution was regarded as one of the best successes in the days following the event. As of right now, there are no plans for the future, however, there have been several requests to continue using the solution on a permanent, non-emergency basis. Going forward, it is recommended that this solution be utilized in table-top events and extended to continue to meet needs during emergencies.

Potential Impacts and VTrans Benefits

It is clear that this solution was fast to implement, provided superior functionality over the traditional methods of resource requests, saved valuable staff time and accordingly there are likely many other business processes at VTrans that could benefit from this approach.