

How VIP Transformed Land Management for 1.1 Million Residents

County of Fairfax, Virginia

Challenge

Land management IT can often feel like a high-stakes Rubik's cube. When twisting one system, three others suddenly shift out of place. For Fairfax County, Virginia, this was especially true. With a robust economy and the largest population in Virginia, the technical systems they had in place could not keep up with their evolving needs.

They grappled with:

- **8 separate systems** utilized by 9 different departments
- **Data silos and redundant processes** across systems, leading to inefficiency and inconsistent service
- **Limited transparency** between departments and for citizens navigating the process
- Complex records with **314 custom record types, 54 database sources, and 20+ interfaces** needed
- **A need for financial integration** for their fee-based applications
- **Technical debt** from the upkeep of outdated systems
- A huge user load of **1000+ back-office staff and support for the 1.1 million residents** in the county

Solution

Fairfax County turned to the Accela Civic Platform and Visionary Integration Professionals (VIP) to implement their new system. What once took 8 systems could now be done in 1 unified platform (named PLUS) that could handle 220 automated processes across 9 departments.

"VIP's design and configuration of the Accela Civic Platform and the associated interfaces with other applications within our existing workflows improved accessibility and transparency for our end users."

**- Randhir Singh
Fairfax County, Virginia**



#1 Nationally for Best Building Permitting Process (NAIOP Research Foundation)



4 Releases by VIP delivered on-schedule, all timelines met



Second largest Accela implementation in history



8 siloed systems consolidated into 1 unified platform



26 interfaces and 24 ArcGIS map services integrated

To ensure clarity and visibility to all involved, VIP managed the implementation of this program using its award-winning Agile methodology which encompassed 32 VIP consultants and over 90 county staff as well as a phased rollout approach of 4 releases in total.

One of the most complex challenges for the set up was ensuring integration with Fairfax County's SAP-based financial platform for application fees. VIP built a custom interface to ensure compliance, captured transactions and enabled end-of day reconciliation. On top of integration with their financial platform, Fairfax County also needed VIP to integrate Accela with ArcGIS which allowed inspectors in the field to improve field efficiency with mobile enhancements.

With 54 legacy data sources, VIP also needed to migrate complex datasets to the new system that included environmental health records, land development permits, zoning and site plans as well as historical inspection data. This was important to the maintenance and preservation of historical data from the previous 8 siloed systems. With data-driven practices in mind, VIP also built a Power BI-based data warehouse that enabled better reporting and real-time dashboards for enhanced decision-making.

The solution was not just technical but involved a strategic and collaborative approach with Fairfax County including internal and external stakeholders (major developers and construction firms) to review prototypes during development. With empowerment being a core pillar of VIP and a focus for this project, VIP led a training program for 1200 users including both internal and public users. This included role-based training modules, user acceptance testing, and on-going support through the Accela Competency Center.

Results

The transformation of Fairfax County led to exceptional results like:

- Over **100,000 permits issued and 160,000 inspections** performed in its first year
- Automation of more than **220 permitting processes**
- A system to support over **1.1 million residents and 1,000+ back-office users**
- A **custom interface with SAP-based financial systems** for hundreds of fee-based applications

Awards

- **Ranked #1 nationally** for permitting transparency by the NAIOP Research Foundation
- **Ranked #1 nationally** in the Digital Counties Survey 2023
- Winner of the **Fairfax County Team Excellence Award** of 2023

“ I would highly recommend VIP's management approach, technical expertise, and their customer-centric focus for other IT projects. I consider them a trusted vendor of choice for future procurements. ”

– Randhir Singh, Land Planning & Development Systems Branch Director

solutions@trustvip.com   