



# Transforming Ann Arbor's digital future

↳ A success story with Govstack's CMS

## Client

Ann Arbor, Michigan

## Website

a2gov.org

## Background

Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a progressive and highly engaged municipality serving a community of approximately 125,000 people. Known for its educated residents and active involvement with local governance, the city heavily relies on its website as a primary method of interaction with the local government. The city had previously used SharePoint as its content management system (CMS) but recognized that the platform was outdated, lacking modern features and functionality essential for the growing demands of its users.

## The challenge

Ann Arbor's website had been on SharePoint for many years, and its CMS was falling behind. With over 200 decentralized web editors, the city needed a CMS capable of catering to a broad spectrum of user skills, from seasoned professionals to those with limited web editing experience. The key challenge was replacing an aging, cumbersome platform while ensuring that staff, many of whom had been using SharePoint for over a decade, could transition smoothly to a more modern system. Furthermore, Ann Arbor needed a solution that would improve website usability, ensure greater flexibility, and integrate better with third-party tools without requiring substantial coding knowledge.

The city faced a secondary issue during the transition: the need for robust training and support for a large and varied group of web editors. With such a diverse group, the adoption of the new system and getting the editors to fully ramp up was expected to be a challenge.

## The solution

After a thorough search and evaluation process, Ann Arbor chose Govstack to replace its outdated SharePoint platform. The city was drawn to Govstack for its user-friendly interface, scalability, and modern CMS capabilities. The city was already familiar with the importance of ongoing optimization, having previously engaged in content cleanup and SEO efforts, and wanted a system that could keep up with those ongoing improvements. Govstack offered a CMS with a flexible, intuitive interface that allowed users to make edits without the need for advanced coding skills. It also provided features like preview functionality before publishing, making the process of editing and updating content more accessible and less prone to error. Moreover, the platform's ability to handle third-party integrations and its support for responsive design aligned perfectly with the city's long-term vision for a more modern, future-proof web presence.

To ensure the smooth adoption of Govstack, the city's communications team worked diligently to support their decentralized network of web editors. Additionally, training resources and the Govstack learning center were made available to help users understand and maximize the platform's features.

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**Govstack has streamlined our website management, making it easier for our diverse team to adapt, regardless of their technical background. The platform's modern features and flexibility have positioned us to better meet the needs of our community and keep up with digital changes.**

– **Kevin Eyer,**  
*Technology & Change Manager*

## The benefits

- ① **Improved Usability:** Web editors, even those with limited technical experience, were able to make changes quickly and efficiently. The intuitive interface of Govstack helped reduce the learning curve, making it easier for staff to manage content without needing advanced technical skills. This ease of use also minimized the disruption during the transition from SharePoint.
- ② **Modern Features:** The city was able to implement features like accordion menus and tile-based layouts, which had previously been impossible in SharePoint without custom coding. These updates helped bring the website up to modern standards and improved the user experience for both internal staff and website visitors.
- ③ **Flexibility and Integration:** The CMS offered better integration with third-party tools and allowed for easier customization. Govstack's flexibility, including the ability to embed content with iframes or JavaScript, met the city's unique needs for complex content display and integration.
- ④ **Increased Efficiency:** With Govstack's centralized content management and intuitive design, the workflow for editing and updating the site became more streamlined. The shift to a modern CMS also aligned with Ann Arbor's larger goal of improving operational efficiency and ensuring that the city's digital presence would continue to evolve as needed.
- ⑤ **Ongoing Accessibility Improvements:** The city continued to prioritize accessibility, using tools like SiteImprove to assess and improve the site's accessibility scores. Although the transition to Govstack did not immediately overhaul accessibility, the platform offered the flexibility necessary for continued improvements in this area.

