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AWARD-WINNING SOLUTION KEEPS AUCKLAND AHEAD OF THE GROWTH CURVE

Auckland Transport
An Auckland Council Organisation

Auckland, New Zealand, has big plans for its city's transportation infrastructure. Auckland cannot afford to think in half-measures, because as a city, it continues to grow at a dramatic pace. By 2020, the city of 1.4 million is expected to expand to 2.2 million, and a lot of those people are going to need access to world class transport systems.

That's why Auckland Transport, the agency responsible for the city's public transportation system, has launched more than 200 capital projects. These projects, which range from bridges to new bike lanes to massive rail tunnels, will help the city fulfill its goal to improve services for current and future Aucklanders while keeping costs down. Regardless of size, City leaders decided to approach all of the infrastructure projects from a holistic, strategic perspective, which is where Microsoft SharePoint Server and partner LeapThought come in.

They adopted a custom digital solution called Fulcrum that could manage the 200-plus planned construction projects from end-to-end. Developed by LeapThought, the 2015 Microsoft CityNext Partner of the Year, Fulcrum uses the capabilities of SharePoint Server to provide cross-departmental tools that help manage properties impacted by projects such as City Rail Link.

Designed to transform the layout of Auckland's rail network, City Rail Link is a NZ$2.4 billion (US$ 1.65 billion), 10-year megaproject that will ensure the city can meet the demand of the next generation of commuters. A new rail tunnel is being dug under the city center to transform the existing dead-end line into a high-capacity loop that passes through the metropolitan area. The City Rail Link tunnel will double the number of trains that run into Auckland's main transport hub, Britomart.

As can be imagined, the sizeable tunnel that they are digging beneath the city center goes through a patchwork of properties, and the City has to follow a well-established bureaucratic process in order to acquire the land needed for the project.

The development team is using Fulcrum to keep track of every step in the complicated property acquisition process and they can now share and review all construction, design, and legal documents related to the project. Because Fulcrum uses the capabilities of SharePoint Server, they are able to track every stage of a project with complete audit capabilities, and stakeholders can store and share large two- and three-dimensional designs in a central location that can be accessed online.

Employees are the heart of Auckland Transport, so it was important that Fulcrum was easy for them to learn. The user interface is familiar because it's built on many of the systems that were already in place. Using a SharePoint Server–based solution also made a lot of sense, because it allowed them to take advantage of existing technology and platform investments, which helps keep costs down.

Although Fulcrum was implemented initially for City Rail Link, the solution can grow and evolve with their agency's needs. The cost savings and operational efficiencies gained by using Fulcrum on big projects can also extend to smaller capital projects as well. Savings of $3 million are estimated for the first 10 years alone, and the more projects put into the system, the more savings that will be realized.