RSM

City of Dublin leverages Microsoft Fabric to strengthen data integration and insight

RSM enhances the city's data analytics environment for stronger decision making

Cities and municipalities, just like private sector organizations, collect vast amounts of data that can inform critical operational and financial decisions. However, many government entities lack a strong analytics foundation to unlock the full potential of that data as a catalyst for actionable insights.

The City of Dublin, Ohio, has established itself as an innovation pacesetter, integrating modern and advanced technology to optimize processes and services to its constituents.

"It's a goal of our city council to be proactive and innovative, at the forefront and leading edge in every area," says Dublin's Data and Analytics Manager Rick Frantz. "From an innovation standpoint, it's an exciting time because data is becoming much more ubiquitous. We have constant streams of data coming in, and we can use that data to improve our operational efficiency."

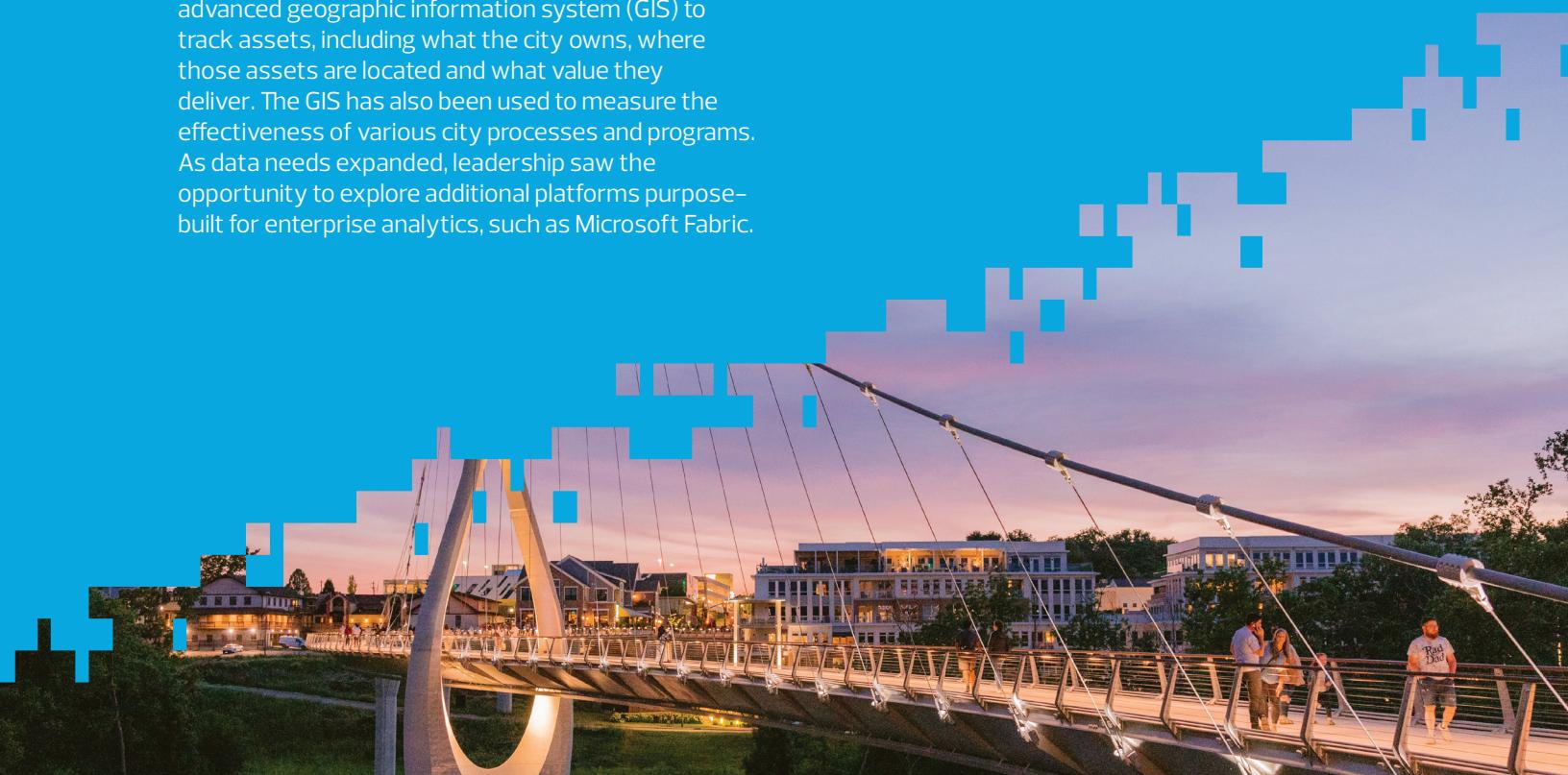### Setting the stage for advanced data analytics

One example of Dublin's innovation is its use of an advanced geographic information system (GIS) to track assets, including what the city owns, where those assets are located and what value they deliver. The GIS has also been used to measure the effectiveness of various city processes and programs. As data needs expanded, leadership saw the opportunity to explore additional platforms purpose-built for enterprise analytics, such as Microsoft Fabric.

After RSM US LLP attended Dublin's annual State of the City event and later reconnected with city leadership at the annual Fabric conference, both teams began exploring how a modernized data solution could advance Dublin's goals. RSM developed a proof of concept (POC) focused on social media data analysis.

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The city's communications and marketing division produces a significant amount of digital content and sought to understand which efforts generated the greatest impact and engagement.

The RSM POC detailed how Dublin residents interact with different social media messaging, connecting and consolidating data in Fabric and then reporting it through Microsoft Power BI. This effort was designed to provide additional knowledge for the communications team on how they can build and support social initiatives going forward.

"Our team wanted more insight than what the individual social platforms could provide," Frantz explains. "They needed something that could bring everything together in one place, and that's exactly what the POC accomplished."

Expanding Fabric integration across city operations

Following the effective POC, RSM and Dublin expanded their relationship to integrate Fabric and expand data analytics capabilities and insight across additional city departments, starting with finance, one of the most data-intensive divisions.

"After the POC, we asked, 'What would have the biggest impact with this new data platform we're building?' Finance was definitely the answer," says Frantz.

Like many cities and municipalities, Dublin uses Tyler Technologies' Enterprise ERP as its financial system of record. While robust, the system required finance staff to reformat reports, upload them to Excel and reauthenticate frequently to view data. The city sought to automate and streamline these steps and gain deeper insight into transactional data.

Because there was no preexisting connection between Tyler Enterprise ERP and Fabric, RSM designed a custom architecture to integrate the two systems. The integration transfers transactional data into Fabric for reporting and analysis with enhanced visibility in addition to scalable data and analytic development capabilities.

"It made sense to remove some of the hurdles our finance staff faced when accessing financial data," Frantz says. "Now, not only finance staff, but also other team members and decision makers, can quickly access accurate, up-to-date budget information."

With financial data captured and consolidated within Fabric, Dublin's leadership now benefits from enhanced reporting capabilities, including year-over-year comparisons, trend analysis and rich visualizations in Power BI. Users can also access dashboards directly through Microsoft Teams, providing decision makers with easy access from multiple devices.

"The data automation and standard financial reports are now being used by their directors and leadership within the city to make strategic budgeting and planning decisions," says RSM Data and Digital Services Manager Sophie Gellerstedt. "It's accurate and up-to-date, and it's really working well."

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Building a unified data environment

With a powerful Fabric-enabled data architecture in place, Dublin has a more effective data environment to support better decision making and operational efficiency. While the biggest impact to date is the availability of detailed finance dashboards, the city has experienced several additional benefits, including:

- Increased automation and reduced manual workload
- Deeper system integration
- Streamlined report sharing through Power BI and Teams

The strong, collaborative relationship between Dublin and RSM has been key to this success.

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Looking ahead: Expanding analytics opportunities

After establishing a strong foundation in financial analytics, Dublin and RSM plan to continue rolling out dashboards to additional users for deeper financial insight. Future phases will expand Fabric integration to other operations, such as the city's parks and recreation facilities. For example, analyzing membership and pool pass data could help the city identify trends that support efforts to attract and retain members.

"They're continuing to find new opportunities and use cases to expand their data analytics capabilities," says Gellerstedt.

Laying the foundation for data-driven success

Government entities hold vast amounts of information with the potential to drive smarter decisions, but having data is only the beginning. Leveraging advanced analytics platforms like Microsoft Fabric enables agencies to integrate diverse data sources, uncover insights and sustain long-term growth.

Through its collaboration with RSM, the City of Dublin has further solidified its reputation as an innovation leader, using data to guide decisions, measure performance and meet the evolving needs of its exceptional community.

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