

# CASE STUDY

## Atlantic Canada's Third-Largest Municipality Tackles Document Modernization with Artificial Intelligence



### ABOUT THE CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY (CBRM)

The CBRM is the second-largest municipality in Nova Scotia and the economic heart of Cape Breton Island. 2025 marked the municipality's 30-year anniversary, celebrating three decades of the amalgamation of the eight former municipalities of Cape Breton County.

### THE CHALLENGE: DOCUMENTS, DOCUMENTS, AND MORE DOCUMENTS

Dealing with documents is a necessary part of every local government. Municipalities need to manage a LOT of documents: permits, public tenders, reports, memos, meeting minutes, purchase orders, estimates, budgets, financial statements, grants, policies, by-laws, public records, archives, and many more.

Keeping operational and administrative documents organized, accessible, and up-to-date is a challenge for most local governments. Many municipalities are sitting on decades of legacy documents in a variety of formats that are difficult to edit, and even harder to standardize.



### THE OPPORTUNITY

With documents of all forms spanning the three decades since its amalgamation, the clerk's office and administrative leadership wanted to explore ways to keep documents current, compliant, and accessible.

They decided to initially focus on one specific (but important) document category: policies. Well over a hundred policies of varied formatting, tone, language, and structure had been written by different team members across departments since 1995.

Efforts had recently been made within CBRM to establish a standardized structure for municipal policies, making it a natural place to start developing a policy modernization workflow.

***"It was important that the solution was user-friendly."***

***Our vision was for something as easy as 'drag-and-drop' or 'copy-paste', making it accessible to anyone on our team."***

***Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk  
Cape Breton Regional Municipality***



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## THE SOLUTION

CBRM worked with VMP Group, a CBRM-based digital services firm that also celebrated its 30-year anniversary in 2025. Coincidentally, both VMP Group and CBRM had been founded on exactly the same day three decades earlier. With nearly 20 years of experience developing AI applications to solve real problems, VMP worked with CBRM to design and pilot an AI-powered workflow. The solution needed to meet three fundamental requirements:

1. *Be easy to use and require no technical knowledge.*
2. *Improve speed and efficiency without increasing workload.*
3. *Avoid sending data to third parties.*

***“Developing a solution for a challenge like this first requires breaking it down into fundamental components.***

***You then need to consider the technical steps in the workflow while balancing it with user experience - in other words, how a user is going to actually interact with the application.”***

***Shawn Green, President & CEO  
VMP Group***

## THE OUTCOME

VMP developed an AI-powered workflow that leveraged several different technologies and strategies: document knowledge collections, OCR (optical character recognition), text extraction & analysis, custom configurations, and a self-hosted AI model. These technology layers and workflow components work together to perform all of the heavy lifting behind the scenes.

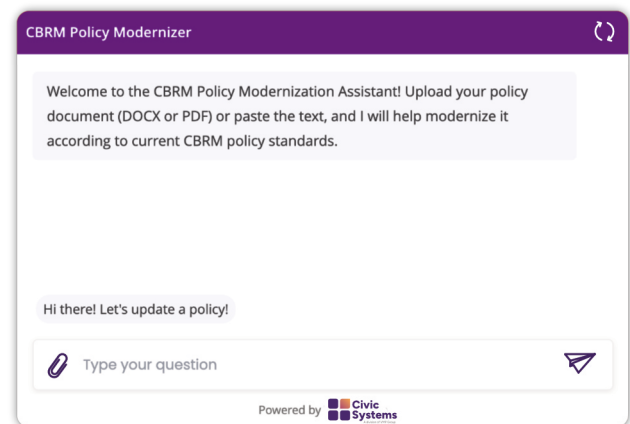
The result is a tool that provided a simple chat interface for user interaction. A user could drag-and-drop an old, out-of-date (and inconsistently formatted) policy and ask it to modernize it using CBRM's current policy structure standards.

Within seconds, a properly formatted and re-written version is generated, ready for their department to review and prepare for approval.

***“What could otherwise be hours, or even days of effort, this system can do in under a minute. We were all surprised at how well it worked.***

***This doesn't replace the need for final human reviews and formal approvals, but it readily addresses more than 90% of the required effort.”***

***Christa Dicks, Municipal Clerk  
Cape Breton Regional Municipality***



Screen capture of Civic Systems' CBRM Policy Modernizer



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