INDUSTRY
Government

LOCATION
Melrose, Massachusetts

KEY CHALLENGES
- Expand IT infrastructure to meet rapidly growing demands of citizens.
- Augment existing data center with hybrid cloud to offer IT services to other municipalities.
- Improve disaster recovery and business continuity capabilities.

SOLUTION
The City of Melrose chose VMware vCloud® Hybrid Service™ to quickly and seamlessly extend its VMware-based data center into a hybrid cloud that allows it to sell IT infrastructure capacity to other local municipalities.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
- Enabled new revenue streams for the city
- Enabled the city to grow its business model quickly to support more municipalities

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City of Melrose Turns to VMware vCloud Hybrid Service to Transform Data Center into Profit Center

The City of Melrose, Massachusetts, a long-time VMware vSphere® customer, wanted to expand its virtualized infrastructure capabilities to meet its growing data and application needs and to offer IT services to other local municipalities for a fee. By deploying VMware vCloud® Hybrid Service™, the city achieved both these goals, while staying agile and innovative in the face of a demanding user base and fast-moving technological change.

Melrose is a small city located approximately seven miles north of Boston, with a geographic area of nearly five square miles and a population of 28,000 residents. Since its settlement as a residential community in the mid-18th century, Melrose has offered its residents a satisfying compromise between the busy city of Boston and the quieter counties of rural Massachusetts.

The Challenge

Deluged by growing volumes of data and applications, the City of Melrose had previously used VMware vSphere software to virtualize its data center. This enabled the IT department to successfully stay on top of accelerating data growth as well as user demands for more applications and IT services.

"Government procurement can move slowly, so acquiring and provisioning on-premise physical infrastructure was time consuming," says Jorge Pazos, chief information officer (CIO) for the City of Melrose. "VMware helped us to be much more agile. We then decided to expand our reach into an even more dynamic space."

This "dynamic space" involved an innovative and highly entrepreneurial idea: Pazos wanted to offer IT infrastructure services to other local municipalities. To accomplish this, he decided to create a regional "super" IT data center in the cloud.

"Many local governments know they want to be in the cloud, but they're nervous," says Pazos. "We figured we could address

that market niche." He says he's not competing directly with Amazon Web Services' Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2). "But we're taking advantage of an opportunity," he says.

When searching for a solution, Pazos had three main concerns: interoperability, performance, and security.

"We wanted the solution to work with what we were already running—VMware vSphere," says Pazos. "We also needed it to perform up to our specifications. Finally, we needed to know that all of the data and all the applications we stored in it would be secure."

The Solution

The City of Melrose chose VMware vCloud Hybrid Service to quickly and seamlessly extend its existing data center into the cloud. vCloud Hybrid Service is an infrastructure-as-a-service cloud that uses vSphere software as its foundation. Because it supports both existing workloads and new application development, it gave the City of Melrose a secure platform for extending its existing data center to the public cloud.

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

• VMware vSphere®
• VMware vCloud® Hybrid Service™

APPLICATIONS VIRTUALIZED

• Microsoft SQL Server
• Microsoft Exchange 2010
• All business-critical applications

Another reason the City of Melrose chose VMware vCloud Hybrid Service is that it is interoperable with the VMware tools that IT professionals were familiar with.

"Because we were already using vSphere, it was easy to scale our data center out with the vCloud Hybrid Service, spin up everything we needed, configure the networking, assign it a domain name, and have it be public-facing to our customers," says Colby Cousens, IT system administrator for the City of Melrose.

Being able to use the cloud for disaster recovery and business continuity was also a critical part of choosing VMware, according to Pazos. "If there's some disruption going on in our data center, the ability to tier our workloads and choose which ones go out to the hybrid cloud is very important to us," he says.

Business Benefits

By deploying vCloud Hybrid Service, the City of Melrose can compete as a managed service provider, delivering IT infrastructure and applications to nearby towns. The town of Essex, 25 miles away, has cut its IT expenditures by 33 percent by using Melrose's cloud. City of Melrose itself has already reduced its costs by more than 40 percent annually.

Choosing a VMware cloud solution eased both the learning and the adoption curve for Melrose. "We were able to realize our cloud vision in days rather than months—much faster than if we'd gone with a different cloud vendor," says Pazos.

Cousens was particularly enthused that the new VMware cloud helped him keep both city users and customers satisfied.

"IT is really all about customer service," says Cousens. "VMware has made it possible for us to keep more than 1,000 employees and 3,700 students happy—and that's not counting our municipal customers."

vCloud Hybrid Service also ensures secure multitenancy, allowing the City of Melrose to keep service offerings secure and separate for different departments and customers. "We can define different networks for different organizations, and we are able to maintain a secure division between our school environments, our customer environments, our public safety environments, and the rest of our internal private networks," says Cousens.

Cousens says even the city's other IT vendors are impressed with vCloud Hybrid Service.

"One of our software vendors asked us to spin up a server and load an application on it. They thought it would take us weeks. But we accomplished it in hours," says Pazos.

Pazos also sees the potential of the VMware service to help them complete special projects like when they recently had to move the city's emergency dispatch operations out of its building into a temporary trailer. "With vCloud Hybrid Service, we would be able to get them back up and running in less than a day," he says. "That ability to adapt on the fly is something that is now inherent to our infrastructure—and VMware is an integral part of that."

Looking Ahead

Today, Pazos likes to think of his IT department as an entrepreneurial startup, with the City of Melrose acting as a venture capitalist funding its growth. "We have some pretty ambitious goals for this department," he says, adding that he would like to get to the point where IT for the City of Melrose is completely revenue neutral. "I think we will eventually be able to sell enough IT services to other cities so that the citizens of the City of Melrose are not paying a dime," he says. "And VMware is driving that innovation."

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