

City of Cambridge Open Data Initiative

Program Goals

The City of Cambridge (the “City”) is committed to using technology to increase accessibility to and transparency of information owned by the City. Providing City-owned information through the Open Data Portal is one means through which the City can foster engagement and collaboration with its citizenry. Making government data available in easy to find and usable formats can create meaningful opportunities for the public to help solve complex challenges. The City must balance the goals of this Open Data Initiative with its obligation to protect private and confidential information, to ensure public safety and security, and to conduct City operations in an efficient and effective manner.

The goals of the Open Data Initiative are:

- **Providing Greater Access.** The City is committed to providing to the public greater access to City data by instituting an Open Data Initiative to provide the City and the public with opportunities to work collaboratively on complex challenges facing our community.
- **Creating Greater Transparency.** The City is committed to sharing information through this Open Data Initiative to create opportunities for greater transparency.
- **Improving Delivery of City Services.** The City is committed to accessing Cambridge’s diverse body of expertise to develop new analyses, insights, and findings which potentially could assist the City’s efforts in providing efficient and effective government services.
- **Realizing Social and Commercial Value.** Because data is a key resource for social and commercial activities, the large amount of data generated by the City can be a resource in the creation of innovative business and services solutions that deliver social and commercial value.

Definitions

The following is list of commonly used terms in this document:

“**API**” means an application programming interface that specifies how some software components should interact with each other.

“**CSV**” means Comma Separated Values.

“Data” or “Data Sets” mean a collection of final versions of statistical or narrative facts or data that record a measurement, transaction, or determination related to the business of the City and that are: collected in an alphanumeric form reflected in a list, table, graph, chart or other non-narrative form, digitally transmitted or processed; and regularly created or maintained by or on behalf of and owned by the City.

Nothing in this document will be deemed to prohibit the City from voluntarily disclosing information not otherwise defined in this section as “Data” or “Data Sets,” as long it is not Protected Data.

“ITD” means the City’s Information Technology Department.

“Machine Readable” means in a format that is reasonably structured to allow for automated processing, including but not limited to application programming interface (“API”) or to comma separated values (“CSV”).

“Massachusetts Public Records Law” will mean M.G.L. c. 4, § 7(26), M.G.L. c. 66, § 10, and 950 CMR 32.

“Open Data Portal” means a web portal established and maintained by ITD that is accessible from the City’s website www.cambridgema.gov and houses all released Data or Data Sets available from City Departments.

“Protected Data” means: any Data or Data Set that is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the Massachusetts Public Records Law; or any Data or Data Set that contains a significant amount of Data that, if disclosed, would impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the City; or any Data or Data Set that reflects the internal deliberative or administrative process(es) of the City, including, but not limited to, Data relating to negotiating positions, future procurements or pending or reasonably anticipated legal or administrative proceedings; or any Data or Data Set stored on an City-owned personal computing device or portion of a network that is assigned exclusively to a City employee; or any Data or Data Set subject to privacy laws, student record laws or subject to copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret protection, or to a confidentiality agreement, or that are otherwise protected by law or contract; or any Data or Data Set that includes or constitutes proprietary applications, computer code, software, operating systems or similar materials; or any Data or Data Set that includes or constitutes employment records, internal employee-related directories or lists, facilities data, information technology, internal service-desk data or any other Data or Data Set related to the internal administration of the City; or any Data or Data Set which, if disclosed by the City, might in the City’s discretion,

raise privacy, confidentiality or security concerns or jeopardize or have the potential to jeopardize public health, safety or welfare.

Open Data Portal

A single web portal will be established and maintained by or on behalf of the City and be accessible through www.cambridgema.gov ("the Open Data Portal"). The ITD will have oversight of the Open Data Portal. The Open Data Portal will include a catalogue of all available Data and Data Sets that will be accessible to external search capabilities. All Data or Data Sets will be accessible without the use of a user account or password. Data or Data Sets will be free of charge. The ITD will establish and maintain on the Open Data Portal an online mechanism to solicit feedback from the public and to encourage public discussion on open data policies and data set availability.

Administration and Oversight of Initiative

In order to ensure the orderly administration and oversight of this Open Data Initiative, the following three-tiered administrative structure will be created:

A Chief Data Coordinator (CDC) will be designated by the City Manager to review the Data and Data Set specifications from the Departmental Open Data Coordinators and the Open Data Advisory Committee. The CDC will work with the ITD as required and review Data and Data Sets uploaded by Departmental Open Data Coordinators to make sure they meet stated Data and Data Set specifications. The CDC will manage the day-to-day oversight of the Open Data Initiative.

An **Open Data Advisory Committee** will be established by the City Manager and report to the Deputy City Manager, or City Manager, or his or her designee to develop internal rules and standards for implementation, including a means by which to determine the Data or Data Sets that are appropriate for public disclosure and a timeline for policy implementation. When reviewing which Data or Data Sets are suitable for release, the Open Data Advisory Committee will make determinations about what fields are appropriate for release. The Open Data Advisory Committee will review public inquiries and review Data and Data Set specifications.

Departmental Open Data Coordinators will be responsible for identifying Data and Data Sets within their department, formatting the Data and Data Sets and uploading it to the Open Data Portal. They will also be responsible for updating these Data and Data Sets regularly.

Data and Data Sets

The City retains ownership over all Data and Data Sets. Public users acquire no ownership rights over City Data or Data Sets. However, all Data and Data Sets that are published by the City through the web portal become a resource that is available to anyone with access to the internet and can be used, for instance, for research or the development of applications. The City will not endorse any applications which employ any Data or Data Sets supplied through the Open Data Portal.

Each City department is responsible for the quality, integrity and accuracy of departmental Data or Data Sets that are published on the web portal. Each Departmental Open Data Coordinator must ensure that departmental Data or Data Sets submitted for public posting has been reviewed by the appropriate department managers for confidentiality, privacy, security and other content limitations, such as information that is exempt from disclosure by law.

Data and Data Set Selection Criteria

Each Department should consider the following criteria when selecting Data or Data Sets for the web portal: whether making the Data or Data Sets available to the public a) improves public knowledge of the department and its operations, b) increases department accountability, c) responds to a need identified by the public, d) furthers the goals of the City, e) provides useable information for the public, f) fosters departmental/interdepartmental efficiencies, and g) creates economic opportunity.

Data and Data Set Availability and Maintenance

Each City department in consultation with the CDC and Open Data Advisory Committee, where practical, will make available appropriate Data and Data Sets to the Open Data Portal. Departments will prepare a maintenance plan for all published Data and Data Sets. Data and Data Sets should be updated at reasonable intervals. Some Data and Data Sets will be updated annually while others may be updated quarterly, monthly, weekly, or even daily. If an automated procedure for updating Data or Data Sets can be used, then every effort will be made to use that procedure. Data and Data Set updates should be in an identical format to Data and Data Set which is being updated if at all possible.

Data Exemption from Public Access

Data or Data Sets or specific information in Data or Data Sets may be removed or redacted if it is Protected Data as defined in this document.

Open Data Initiative Legal Policy

Data or Data sets made available on the Open Data Portal website are provided for informational purposes only. The City does not warranty the completeness, accuracy, content or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any Data or Data Set made available on the website, nor are any such warranties to be implied or inferred with respect to the Data or Data Sets furnished therein. The City is not liable for any deficiencies in the completeness, accuracy, content or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any Data or Data Set, or application utilizing or otherwise relying upon such Data or Data Set, provided by the City or by or through any third party.

Nothing in this Open Data Initiative will be construed to create a private right of action to enforce its provisions. Failure to comply with this initiative will not result in any liability of the City or its employees. The City's Open Data Portal and all Data or Data Sets will be subject to Terms of Use developed by the City. Such Terms of Use will be posted by the City in a conspicuous place on the City Open Data Portal.

The City will reserve the right to discontinue availability of content on the City's Open Data Portal at any time and for any reason.