THE CORPORATION OF THE

CITY OF WHITE ROCK

15322 BUENA VISTA AVENUE, WHITE ROCK, B.C. V4B 1Y6

POLICY TITLE: OPEN DATA

POLICY NUMBER: NO. 801

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Policy:

Policy Statement

The City of White Rock actively disseminates Open Data while adhering to applicable legislation including the privacy, security, and confidentiality provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

Rationale:

The purpose of the City of White Rock Open Data Policy is to improve the management and use of the City's data assets in order to deliver value and benefits for its residents. This includes a greater release of appropriate and high-value data to the public in ways that are easily discoverable and usable. It is intended that opening access to City's data will increase productivity and improve service delivery by supporting innovation, research and education, and by facilitating collaboration and evidence-based decision making.

Furthermore, it outlines the principles, roles and responsibilities by which the City of White Rock data is made available to the public as valuable, machine-readable datasets.

Introduction

The City of White Rock collects and uses a wide array of data in the course of its everyday operations. This data is an important strategic asset and, when managed well, is a source of significant value to the City.

Many public sector organizations already make their data available to the public, including on their websites or in reports and publications. Taking steps to make this data easier to find and use, and opening access to other datasets, will unlock opportunities for the public sector, businesses and communities to utilize data in more and diverse ways. This gives rise to the development of new insights, ideas and services that have the potential to improve the way we work and live. Given the current fiscal constraints and pressures on government services, including increasing demand for flexible and high quality online and mobile services, better management and new uses of existing assets such as data is now more important than ever.

What is Open Data?

In practice across Canada and the world, the approach to open data varies to some extent. For the purpose of this Policy, data is considered 'open' when it is:
- released and available for the general public (not for exclusive use);
- easily discoverable;
- in formats that are modifiable, non-proprietary and machine-readable;
- licensed to enable reuse and redistribution; and
- available at no cost to users.

Why Open Data?

Opening access to public sector data, together with approaches to removing restrictions surrounding its use, is a growing trend nationally and internationally. Better management and use of data within government and enabling broader access and use (e.g. by non-government organizations, businesses and industry, academia and members of the public) has a range of potential benefits for both the public sector and the community.

This includes a more efficient and effective public sector through improvements in the use and application of data for financial and evidence-based policy decisions and the development of innovative solutions, services and tools where there is an identified policy or community need. Opening access to data also supports public sector efficiencies and savings through reduced duplication, streamlined processes, and the development and delivery of tools/services more quickly and at lower costs.

For the broader community, potential social and economic benefits include opportunities to develop new businesses (including the not-for-profit sector); improved research outcomes; and better business and community decision making. Opening access to public sector data also promotes a more transparent and accountable government by providing greater visibility around government activity and expenditure.

Application

This policy applies to all City staff and to all data in the custody and under the control of the City of White Rock. Personal information must be removed from all datasets before publication. Constituency data of the City's elected representatives are not considered to be in the custody and control of the City and therefore not subject to this policy. The data released by departments as part of the Open Data program will follow these principles where operationally feasible:

Open Data Principles

1. **Data quality:** Any data that is not subject to valid privacy, security or privilege limitations is made available. It is important users have confidence in the data they are accessing and using and are made aware of any caveats relating to it. To enable users to determine whether a dataset is suitable for their purposes, data should be made available with a statement, or metadata, regarding its purpose and quality. Even where there are limitations with regard to a dataset, such as an incomplete dataset, releasing the data is encouraged, provided sufficient information is included to notify users of any limitations or gaps.
2. **Primary:** Data will be primary source data where possible with data collection methods documented.
3. **Timely**: Data is made available to the public in a timely fashion to preserve the value of the data taking into consideration the type of data (real-time vs. static).

4. **Accessible:** Data released by the City should be as accessible as possible, with accessibility defined as the ease with which information can be obtained. Providing an interface for users to make specific calls for data through an Application Programming Interface (API) makes data more accessible.

5. **Machine-readable:** Machines can handle certain kinds of inputs much better than others. Datasets released by the City should be stored in widely used file formats that easily lend themselves to machine processing (e.g. CSV, XML). Datasets will be published in machine-readable formats so that the data can be easily leveraged for various uses such as mobile applications, visualizations and websites.

6. **Non-discriminatory:** Non-discrimination refers to who can access data and how they must do so. Static data is available to anyone with no requirement of registration. Real-time data requires registration by the individual to keep them informed of system changes.

7. **Non-proprietary:** Datasets released by the City should be in freely available file formats as often as possible.

8. **Licensing:** The City releases datasets under the Open Data License. This license is based on the Open Government License – Canada, which was developed through public consultation. The license is designed to increase openness and minimize restrictions on use of the data. Datasets are not subject to any copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret regulation.

9. **Permanence of datasets:** The capability of finding information over time is referred to as permanence. For best use by the public, datasets made available online should remain online, with appropriate version-tracking and archiving over time.

10. **Usage costs:** The City releases the data on the Open Data Portal (www.data.whiterockcity.ca) free of charge.

Release of Open Data

As part of their data management responsibilities, all City departments will establish an annual Open Data Release Plan that includes:

1. A publication plan, to be updated annually, outlining the general timelines for release of the datasets identified by the department.

2. A summary of datasets published to date by the respective department. Each department will take into account public requests for data and, whenever possible, attempt to match publication of datasets to public requests.

Responsibilities

City Staff is responsible for:

- Sharing with the public its open and accessible datasets while adhering to rights of privacy, security and confidentiality as identified in the applicable provincial and federal legislation.
- Preparing and publishing datasets via the Open Data Portal (data.whiterockcity.ca), which meet the principles identified in this policy.
- Maintaining the dataset to ensure that the data is up-to-date to preserve the value and quality of the information provided. Review cycles will be established and at a minimum, the datasets will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the departmental Open Data Release Plans.

Open Data Team is responsible for:

- Managing the Open Data Portal (www.data.whiterockcity.ca) and ensuring that published data meets the principles identified in this policy.

- Proposing Open Data Release plans to departments for consideration based on public requests and what other municipalities are releasing using the Open Cities Index as a guide.
- Posting on the Open Data Portal an Open Data License, supported file formats, glossary and other dataset context information to promote the responsible use of City of White Rock data.
- Coordinating with the Manager of Property, Risk and Freedom of Information or designate:
  - Upon request from City Staff, reviewing proposed datasets for adherence to legislated privacy. Providing recommendations to City Staff regarding the removal of personal information and quasi-identifiers from proposed datasets.
  - Releasing datasets to the Open Data Team where a formal Freedom of Information request has already been made and the request aligns with principles outlined in this policy. Advising City Staff of the proposed Open Data release of datasets obtained through formal Freedom of Information requests.

Senior Managers are responsible for:

- Approving the annual departmental Open Data Release Plans that contribute to achieving the annual dataset release targets.
- Working with the Open Data Team on the planning, development and publication of new datasets, the review of existing datasets, and the archiving of superseded datasets as required.
- Consulting with the Corporate Services staff on proposed new datasets for guidance on legislated privacy requirements.
- Ensuring new proposed dataset releases conform with legislated privacy requirements.

Review

This Policy is subject to review at the end of the first year and at least every two years, or as deemed appropriate, thereafter.

Definitions

Confidential Information includes but is not limited to personally identifiable information such as home telephone numbers, personal health information, employee files, credit card information, in-camera minutes, third-party commercially valuable information, and solicitor-client and litigation privileged information. It also typically includes City or partner business information that would be withheld from disclosure pursuant to mandatory and/or discretionary exemptions to disclosure under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Data is information for computer processing. That is, in a form suitable for storage in, or processing by computer software. Data typically comprises numbers and text but can also comprise things such as images, sounds and symbols. A dataset is a collection of related data records. Raw data is data in a pre-interpreted form or not yet subjected to analysis or processing. Information is any collection of data that is processed, analyzed, interpreted, classified or communicated in order to serve a useful purpose, present fact or represents knowledge in any medium or form.

Data linking is where separate sets of data are combined or a connection between the data is made. Data linking can provide a means for better analysis of the subjects of the data; however, caution needs to be exercised to ensure it does not reveal personally identifiable information.

Machine-readable (data) is data which is in a format that can be read and interpreted by a computer program or through a calculation process without the need for manual human intervention and can be read automatically by a web browser or computer system. Formats such as XML, JSON, or

spreadsheets in CSV are machine-readable. Word processing documents in formats such as PDF are not.

FIPPA means the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, as amended, and includes any regulations passed under it.

Open Data is a philosophy and practice requiring that certain data are made freely available to the public, in machine-readable format without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control.

Open Data Portal is the website at data.whiterockcity.ca that is the source of data released by the City of White Rock for free use by the public.

Open Data Team is a team of City of White Rock employees tasked with managing and posting data to the Open Data Portal.

Personal Information as defined by FIPPA means any recorded information about an identifiable individual, including:

a. information relating to the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital or family status of the individual,
b. information relating to the education or the medical, psychiatric, psychological, criminal or employment history of the individual or information relating to financial transactions in which the individual has been involved,
c. any identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual,
d. the address, telephone number, fingerprints or blood type of the individual,
e. the personal opinions or views of the individual except if they relate to another individual,
f. correspondence sent to an institution by the individual that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature, and replies to that correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence,
g. the views or opinions of another individual about the individual, and
h. the individual's name if it appears with other personal information relating to the individual or where the disclosure of the name would reveal other personal information about the individual;