

# SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT OPEN DATA POLICY

*Unanimously Approved by the BART Board of Directors on October 27, 2016*

## **Introduction**

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (District or BART) is committed to increasing transparency, accountability, efficiency, public engagement, and supporting technological innovation and economic growth. The District further recognizes that every citizen has the right to prompt, efficient service from the District.

In accordance with that commitment, the District's efforts in providing Open Data for BART transit services, including schedule and real time arrivals, provide a model on which the District can continue to build.

The District recognizes that access to public information, including access to public data, promotes a higher level of civic engagement and allows citizens to provide valuable feedback to District staff and policy makers. One goal of an Open Data policy is to proactively provide information currently sought through Public Information Act requests, thereby saving the District time and money.

In commitment to the spirit of Open Government, the District will consider public information to be open by default and will proactively publish data and data containing information, consistent with relevant public records law. Consistent with that commitment the District recognizes that information technologies, including web-based and other Internet applications and services, are an essential means for Open Government and good government generally. The protection of privacy, confidentiality, and security will be maintained as a paramount priority while also advancing the government's transparency and accountability through open data.

## **Section 1: Definitions**

1. "Data" means statistical, factual, quantitative, or qualitative information that is regularly maintained or created by a District Department or a contractor, vendor or other entity on behalf of a District Department.
2. "Open data" means data that are available online, in an open format, with no legal encumbrances on use or reuse.
3. "Open format" means any widely accepted, nonproprietary, platform-independent, machine-readable method for formatting data, which permits automated processing of such data and facilitates search capabilities.
4. "Dataset" means a named collection of related records, with the collection containing data organized or formatted in a specific or prescribed way, often in tabular form.

5. "Protected information" means any dataset or portion thereof to which a department may deny access pursuant to California statutes or any other law, rule or regulation or on the basis that the disclosure may constitute an infringement on a third party's right to privacy.
6. "Sensitive information" means any data which, if published on the Open Data Portal, could raise privacy, confidentiality or security concerns or have the potential to jeopardize public health, safety, or welfare to an extent that is greater than the potential public benefit of publishing that data.
7. "Publishable data" means data which are not protected or sensitive and which has been prepared for release on the open data web portal.

## **Section 2: Open Data Initiative**

1. Constant with this resolution and the goals specified herein, the District will develop and implement practices that allow it to:
  - a. Release publishable, non-private, District data, making that data freely available in open formats, making it fully accessible to the broadest range of users;
  - b. Publish high quality, updated data with documentation (including metadata and a summary of the processes that were used to create specific data sets);
  - c. Establish and maintain an open data web portal that provides a central location for public review of published District data;
  - d. Employ open source software solutions whenever possible and share open source code in public repositories;
  - e. Provide broad disclosure of public information while appropriately safeguarding protected and sensitive information; and
  - f. Encourage innovative uses of the District's publishable data by agencies, the public, and other partners.
2. The development and implementation of these practices shall be the responsibility of the Office of the Chief Information Officer.
3. This resolution and the goals specified herein shall apply to any District department, office, administrative unit, board, advisory committee and any other divisions of the District ("department").

## **Section 3: Governance**

1. Implementation of this Open Data Initiative Resolution will be overseen by the Office of the Chief Information Officer.
2. The Office of the Chief Information Officer shall work with all departments within the District to:
  - a. Identify a lead open data coordinator within each department. The coordinator will be responsible for oversight and management of that department's participation in the Open Data Initiative, including requests for budget or resources to support that participation;

- b. Develop a comprehensive inventory of datasets held by each District department;
  - c. Develop and implement a process for determining whether information is private, sensitive or otherwise protected and establish whether the information may be published; the relative level of risk and public benefit associated with potentially sensitive, non-protected information so as to make a determination about whether and how to publish it;
  - d. Work with the Office of the General Counsel to determine if the information identified by the departments may, legally, be made publically available;
  - e. Develop and implement a process for prioritizing the release of datasets to the Open Data Portal, including historic and archival material, which takes into account new and existing signals of interest from the public (such as the frequency of Public Information Act requests), the District's programmatic priorities, existing opportunities for data use in the public interest, and cost;
  - f. Establish processes for publishing datasets to the Open Data Portal, including processes for ensuring that datasets are reviewed for use-appropriate formats, quality, timeliness, and exclusion of protected and sensitive information;
  - g. Optimize the quality and timeliness of data collection to avoid the inefficiencies created by paper-based systems and allow structured data to be created in the natural course of business;
  - h. Develop and oversee a routinely updated, public timeline for new dataset publication; and
  - i. Ensure that published datasets are available for bulk download or via APIs, or Application Programming Interfaces, to enable search and retrieval.
3. To ensure that the commitments and goals as set forth in this Resolution are met, the Office of the Chief Information Officer will actively encourage department and public participation by providing regular opportunities for feedback and collaboration.

#### **Section 4: Central Online Location for Published Data**

1. The District will endeavor to create and maintain a publicly available location on the District's website or in another suitable online location where the District's published data will be available for download.
2. Datasets published on the Open Data Portal shall be placed into the public domain.

#### **Section 5: Open Data Report and Review**

1. Within one year of the effective date of this Resolution, and once a year thereafter, the Office of the Chief Information Officer shall submit to the BART Board of Directors an annual Open Data Report. The report shall include an assessment of progress towards achievement of the goals of this Resolution, a list of datasets currently available on the Open Data Portal, and a description and publication timeline for datasets envisioned to be published on the portal in the following year.

2. During the review and reporting period, the Office of the Chief Information Officer should also make suggestions for improving the District's open data management processes in order to ensure that the District continues to move towards the achievement of the District's commitment.