June 26th, 2016

To the City of Milwaukee regarding the Proposed Open Data Policy on behalf of the Milwaukee Data Initiative and its members:

For the past five years, the Milwaukee Data Initiative and its 600+ members have been advocating for increased access to information and more involvement in the civic technology scene from the City of Milwaukee. For many years before that, local GIS and social service data experts have been asking for greater public access to information.

We have been encouraged by the work and support of the City CIO over the last 25 years, and see the Bloomberg What Works Cities grant and the proposed Open Data Policy as a result of our collaboration with department and elected City officials.

The Milwaukee Data Initiative and HackMKE support this important first step toward re-shaping local government into a beacon of innovation.

The policy contains much of the language we suggested to the City early in the process, gleaned from strong policy examples from other cities. We believe the proposed Open Data Policy will greatly enhance the possibilities for the City to improve its efficiency, deeply engage area residents and create opportunities for solution building and economic development. We hope this is just the beginning of the City's long-term efforts, and that your ongoing strategy will include improvements to digital processes and capacity building.

We look forward to continuing our support of the City as it furthers its open data and civic technology efforts.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Matt Richardson
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