



## **CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

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**DATE:** June 6, 2017

**DEPARTMENT:** Public Works, GIS Division

**FROM:** Eric Sandoval, Geographic Information Systems Administrator

**TITLE:** CITY OF SALINAS OPEN DATA POLICY

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

A motion to approve the attached Resolution approving City of Salinas Open Data Policy

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the resolution that establishes Open Data Policy for the City of Salinas

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Open Data Policy will establish the framework to develop a plan to inventory, prioritize and responsibly publish datasets from City projects and programs. This Policy also provides a framework to implement best practices for an Open Data Portal including annual updates, data publishing criteria and review, governance structure and metadata standards. The goal is to provide a user-friendly system to assist with search, access and download of relevant City datasets while maintaining privacy and being aware of sensitive data.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Salinas is the largest city in the Salinas Valley and in fact, is the largest coastal city from San Jose to Oxnard, CA. 31.4% of the City population is under the age of 18 and 73% is Hispanic. By comparison, California has a population of 25% under 18 and 37.6% Hispanic. 40% of adults in Salinas do not have a high school diploma and 20.2% live in poverty (2015 American Community Survey & US Census). Because of the educational and economic levels of the community, many residents have experienced a “Digital Divide” that has caused an “Information Divide.” Currently the public has limited access, search capability or data tools available.

Participation and input from informed residents promotes local democracy and government. One way to facilitate participation is to increase transparency and provide information about government activities in a centralized site. In December of 2016, the City received a Bloomberg Philanthropy grant to develop Open Data Policy and began work toward increasing government transparency. This resolution is the final product of those efforts.

## DISCUSSION:

Social Equity and community outreach are part of the Strategic Plan for the City of Salinas. To meet the needs of its residents, foster community input and improve government transparency, the City of Salinas has developed Open Data Policy to guide the implementation and creation of an Open Data Portal.

This resolution was provided to City Department Directors, the Police and Fire Chiefs and City Attorney for review and comments. An Open Data working group, with representatives from each department developed and reviewed the resolution. Additionally, surveys from staff and external partners were conducted to gain feedback regarding the Open Data Policy initiative. Over 100 individuals responded to our survey through outreach events and online survey questionnaires.

This resolution and policy would be new to the City's ongoing efforts to serve the community. The policy utilizes existing technology, but does so in an innovative way for local government, public engagement and should provide the catalyst for a transformative process that changes how government does business, interacts and serves its residents.

There are a number of studies by the Sunlight Foundation and the Government Excellence program of Johns Hopkins University that indicate that Open Data governments increase educational opportunities, business opportunities and civic engagement in local government. The City anticipates that its Open Data Portal will fill these needs and provide the benefits of residents' participation in local democratic institutions. If the City is to continue to be a leader in the region, making its data available for easy access and consumption is critical.

## CEQA CONSIDERATION:

**Not a Project.** The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

## STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The Open Data Policy promotes all five City Council goals by reducing barriers to information and data for both city staff and the public.

#### FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The policy itself does not have a fiscal impact. Implementation of Open Data Policy will have some fiscal impact related to IT infrastructure and software requirements. A future Implementation Plan will have a detailed analysis of costs and schedule for implementation and creation of an Open Data Portal.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution