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Contact:
David Low, Public Information Officer, (408) 535-4840

City Council Unanimously Approves New Open Data Policy

SAN JOSE, Calif. – On Tuesday, April 5, the San José City Council unanimously approved a new Open Data Policy that will help advance government transparency and empower organizations and individuals throughout the community to participate in efforts to use big data to improve services.

“We live in the most innovative community on the planet,” Mayor Sam Liccardo said. “By making our city data more open and accessible to the public, we have the opportunity to embrace ‘the wisdom of the crowd’ to really help move our city forward.”

Through the new [Open Data Policy](#), data collected and generated by the City will be open by default, except where the public release of such data would violate privacy laws, reveal privileged information, violate contractual or proprietary rights, and/or jeopardize the security of individuals or property.

The new policy also calls for the creation of a single Open Data Portal to serve as a central hub for all of the City’s publicly accessible data. This portal - data.sanjoseca.gov - already includes a range of datasets from unemployment rates to average daily traffic, with further plans to improve the quality and volume of data in the months ahead.

In addition to improving public transparency, open data is a key building block of advanced data analytics that can help the City improve the effectiveness and efficiency of city services (for example, by building predictive models that identify “hotspots” to address public safety issues like traffic crashes, crime, and illegal dumping). And by making the data open to the public, civic-minded residents and organizations will be able to develop new visualizations, analyses, and applications that can help address the most pressing issues facing the City.

“Opening our data to the community is the first step in turning our city into a platform,” said Shireen Santosham, the mayor’s chief innovation officer. “In the coming years, we’ll add more datasets that can benefit residents by not only having more data to experiment with but also providing the opportunity to create applications that further improve services and the community’s quality of life.

Silicon Valley innovators have already partnered with the City on a number of projects that utilized data already available to the public. These demonstration sites include:

- A visualization of the city’s transportation budget (<http://auditor.sanjoseca.gov/>),
- A map with icons of crime across the city (<http://bit.ly/1YeaV5q>), and
- A user friendly representation on San José’s fire incidents (<http://bit.ly/1XfOdtl>).

The Open Data Policy also represents an important first step toward achieving Mayor Liccardo’s recently released [Smart City Vision](#), which is designed to utilize technology, data analytics and digital tools to significantly improve city services and the quality of life enjoyed by San José residents.