



City Manager's Office Administrative Policy Open Data

Issue 1
April 3, 2026

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to City of North Port departments and employees in the distribution of open data and the implementation of an open data program. This policy will affirm the City of North Port's commitment to open, transparent, and effective government and allows the community to easily access and use City data to better understand services, track progress and actively engage in the civic process. In addition, this policy will provide for an open data platform to increase the sharing of information among City Departments, and in doing so, improve the City's ability to deliver quality services to the community.

Through expanding access to City data, this Open Data Policy aims to reduce public records requests, enhance transparency, streamline data sharing and analysis across departments, support more efficient customer service, and increase public confidence in the accuracy and reliability of information shared by the City. This policy is intended to complement, and not supersede, requirements of Florida's public records laws and any applicable federal or state confidentiality statutes.

II. Scope

This policy covers data created, collected, and maintained by the City of North Port or by contracts or third parties on behalf of the City of North Port.

III. Definitions

- A. **Confidential data:** sensitive data requiring protection to prevent unauthorized access that if released could cause operational, reputational or infrastructure harm.
- B. **Data:** statistical, factual, quantitative, or qualitative information that is maintained or created by or on behalf of a City department or division. This definition is inclusive of software source code developed or maintained by or on behalf of the City.
- C. **Dataset:** a named collection of related records, with the collection containing data organized or formatted in a specific or prescribed way, often in tabular form.
- D. **Data classification:** the process of addressing the relevance of a given dataset to an agency's mission, confidentiality, sensitivity, customary availability, and legal requirements so that the appropriate level of openness and protection can be determined and applied.
- E. **Data inventory:** a comprehensive, regularly updated log of the City's data assets, including dataset ownership, classification, and publication status.

- F. Department:** refers to all departments, divisions, boards, commissions, agencies and internal and external organizations responsible for providing and disseminating data.
- G. Internal data:** data used within the organization that is not intended for public access that may contain personally identifiable information or statutory restrictions but may be draft, incomplete or unvalidated.
- H. Machine-readable:** any widely accepted, non-proprietary, platform-independent, machine-readable method for formatting data (such as JSON, XML, and APIs), which permits automated processing of such data and facilitates search capabilities.
- I. Metadata:** structured information that describes a dataset and makes it easier to find, understand, and use, such as title, description, owner, creation date, update frequency and format.
- J. Open data:** data that is available online, in an open format, with no legal encumbrances on use or reuse and is available for all to access and download in full without fees or a requirement of registration.
- K. Open data program:** program dedicated to making City of North Port data available to the public and engaging civic technologists, the research community, and other partners to make use of open data in support of the program's goals.
- L. Open format:** any widely accepted nonproprietary, platform-independent, machine-readable data format, which permits automated processing of such data and facilitates analysis and search capabilities.
- M. Protected information:** data restricted from public release due to legal, privacy, or security concerns.
- N. Public data:** information that is intended for public access and disclosure, contains no sensitive or protected content, and may be freely shared, published, or posted without risk of harm to individuals or the City.
- O. Qualified data:** data that has undergone documented validation and quality assurance processes to ensure accuracy, completeness, and consistency for its intended use. Qualified data is approved for official reporting, performance management, accreditation, and decision-making.
- P. Raw data:** data in its original form as collected from a source system, before validation, correction, or application of business rules. Raw data may contain errors, incomplete records, or inconsistencies. Raw data may be released for transparency purposes, but is not certified for official reporting, performance measurement, or accreditation documentation.
- Q. Restricted data:** highly sensitive data with the highest level of protection required including restrictions on disclosure by federal, state, or local law and requires strict role-based access controls and legal review before sharing.
- R. Sensitive information:** any data which, if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in substantial harm.

IV. Open Data Program

The City commits to develop and implement practices that will allow it to:

- A.** Ensure data is presented in a clear, user-friendly manner and provide opportunities for community feedback to inform future data releases and improvements.
- B.** Proactively release all publishable City data.

- C. Make data freely available in open formats, with no restrictions on use or reuse, and fully accessible to the broadest range of users to use for varying purposes.
- D. Publish high-quality, updated data with documentation (metadata) and permanence to encourage maximum use.
- E. Provide or support access to free, historical archives of all released City data.
- F. Measure the effectiveness of the datasets made available through the Open Data Program by connecting the open data efforts to the City's strategic priorities.
- G. Appropriately safeguard protected and sensitive information.
- H. Support innovative uses of the City's publishable data by agencies, the public, and other partners.

V. Governance

Implementation of the Open Data Program will be overseen by City of North Port Data Governance Steering Committee, who will work with the City's departments to:

- A. For each City department, identify and share appropriate contact information for a lead open data coordinator who will be responsible for managing that department's participation in the Open Data Program.
- B. Oversee the creation of a comprehensive inventory of datasets held by each City department that is published to the central open data location and is regularly updated, as applicable.
- C. Develop and implement a process for determining the relative level of risk and public benefit associated with potentially sensitive, non-protected information to decide whether and how to publish it.
- D. Develop and implement a process for prioritizing the release of datasets that considers new and existing signals of interest from the public (such as the frequency of public records requests), the City's strategic priorities, existing opportunities for data use in the public interest, financial feasibility, staff time, and technical effort required to prepare and publish the dataset.
- E. Engage with the community to identify data needs, priorities and gaps where feasible to incorporate those insights into dataset development and publication.
- F. Establish processes for publishing datasets to the central open data location, including processes for ensuring that datasets are high quality, up to date, and in use-appropriate formats and exclude protected and sensitive information.
- G. Ensure that appropriate metadata is provided for each dataset to facilitate its use.
- H. Develop and oversee a routinely updated, public timeline for new dataset publication.
- I. Ensure that published datasets are available for bulk download without legal encumbrance.
- J. Address legacy or historical datasets that do not meet current standards by clearly labeling their limitations and, where feasible, remediating or supplementing them to improve quality and usability.
- K. Identify organizational training needs related to data governance and open data publication and assist in facilitating appropriate training and guidance for staff to promote consistent, high-quality practices.
- L. Increase and improve use of the City's open data by actively encouraging department and public participation by providing regular opportunities for feedback and collaboration.

VI. Central online location for publishable data

The City will create and maintain a publicly available location on the City’s website or in another suitable online location where the published data will be available for download.

Published datasets shall be placed into the public domain. Dedicating datasets to the public domain means that there are no restrictions or requirements placed on use of these datasets.

Each published dataset should be associated with contact information for the appropriate manager of that dataset as well as with a file layout or data dictionary that provides information about field labels and values.

VII. Open Data report and review

On an annual basis, the Data Governance Steering Committee shall publish an Open Data Report that will be made public. That report shall include an assessment of progress towards achievement of goals of the City’s Open Data Program, as assessment of how the City’s open data work has furthered or will further the City’s strategic priorities, and a description and publication timeline for datasets envisioned to be published by the City in the following year.

During the review and reporting period, the Data Governance Steering Committee should also make suggestions for improving the City’s open data management processes to ensure that the City continues to move towards the achievement of the policy’s goals.

VIII. Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and may be updated based on changes in law, technology, and organizational needs; implementation standards and procedures may be updated more frequently by the Data Governance Steering Committee.

Approval

This Administrative Policy has been approved and is in effect as of April 3, 2026.

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City Manager**

Signature: