



DATA GOVERNANCE CHARTER

CITY OF SUGAR LAND

BACKGROUND

The City of Sugar Land works relentlessly to provide the best possible services and quality of life for its residents and to stand out as a world-class local government organization. The City recognizes that to be a community of choice, it must demonstrate a commitment to efficiency, decision-making guided by data, and adaptability to the ever-changing demands of the modern environment. As technology evolves, the City will continue to generate larger amounts of data, and it is imperative that the City have methods in place to turn data into insights. Some of the major initiatives being explored by the City to better utilize data are smart city elements and the What Works Cities certification process. In conjunction with broader efforts to prioritize transparency, interoperability, and accountability, the City is also making it a priority to enhance the Open Data Portal by continuously adding new datasets, improving existing datasets, and updating the user interface.

In working towards these initiatives, City leadership recognized a need for data governance as it serves as the foundation for all data and technological improvements. A Data Governance Committee is vital to ensuring there is citywide guidance for sharing information and protecting privacy. The City of Sugar Land holds its data and information assets in the same regard as any other City asset. Therefore, its data must be managed, secured, accounted for, and maintained just as it would with any other material or financial asset. Although it has been identified as one of the four highest priorities for the City in 2024, the City recognizes that instilling the best practices related to the use of data is a continued pursuit that is integral to our future success.

MISSION

The City of Sugar Land is committed to viewing all of its data as an asset that is regularly used for informed decision-making and guiding organizational improvements in efficiency and

service delivery. The City believes that setting high standards for data quality, privacy, and sharing builds trust and allows for collaboration, both internally and externally. This charter establishes the Data Governance Committee (DGC) as the official collaborative body responsible for providing strategic direction regarding data governance and management. The DGC will develop and review policies and procedures related to the City's data assets, provide guidance on citywide data initiatives, establish processes that optimize data use and accessibility, ensure that data related activities align with the City's strategic priorities, and act as a central advisory body for data related matters.

DATA GOVERNANCE

Data governance refers to a set of policies, processes, and tools that ensure data quality, accessibility, usability, integrity, and the overall readiness of data that is used to make business decisions intended to create, improve, or sustain services, processes, and products. By implementing strong data governance practices, the City can realize the following benefits:

1. **Improved Data Quality:** With standardized processes and controls, data becomes more accurate, complete, and consistent, which leads to better decision-making and improved service delivery.
2. **Enhanced Data Security:** By establishing data access and security policies, the organization can protect data from unauthorized access, cyber threats, and other security breaches.
3. **Better Compliance:** With the increasing number of data protection laws and regulations, it is critical to establish data governance policies that are compliant with these regulations and guidelines.
4. **Improved Collaboration:** Data governance policies and procedures can facilitate better collaboration among departments and stakeholders, leading to increased coordination and efficiency.
5. **Financial Responsibility:** Increased emphasis on data throughout the organization will enhance the ability to track return on investments and inform funding decisions.
6. **Increased Accountability:** Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for data management, helps to ensure accountability for the quality, security, and ethical use of data.

To deliver better outcomes and realize these benefits, the DGC will produce a comprehensive set of policies and standard operating procedures related to managing and regulating data, including but not limited to data inventory, data privacy, data quality, open data, and performance management.

DEFINITIONS

- **Data** - Qualitative or quantitative information collected for reference and/or analysis regularly maintained, acquired, or created by, or on behalf of the City if in the

possession of a city department, office, or employee. Data is used as a reference for reasoning, discussion, or calculation.

- **Database** – A collection of data stored according to a schema.
- **Dataset** - A collection of related data presented in tabular or non-tabular form that can be pulled from a data source.
- **Data Governance** - A set of policies, processes, and tools that ensure data quality, accessibility, usability, integrity, and the overall readiness of data that is used to make business decisions intended to create, improve, or sustain services, processes, and products.
- **Data Integrity** - Validity, reliability, reproducibility, and accuracy of data. Having data integrity requires a clear understanding of the business processes underlying the data and the consistent definition of individual data elements.
- **Data Privacy** - Policies and practices that govern the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data to protect sensitive information and mitigate chances of loss, breach, or tampering
- **Metadata** - Any information that is used to provide descriptive detail about a dataset, including but not limited to, the date range, a description, or the owner.
- **Open Data** - Data that is made available to the public consistent with any and all applicable laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, resolutions, policies or other legal restrictions, requirements or rights associated with the data. Data will not be Open Data if it meets the definition of Private, Protected, or Sensitive Information.
- **Open Data Portal** - A single web portal owned and maintained by the City that will be the repository and public access point for open data.
- **Personally Identifiable Information** - Any information that can be used to identify, contact, or locate an individual, either alone or combined with other easily accessible sources. It includes information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial and employment information such as the following is Private Information.
 - PII alone-
 - Social Security number (There are additional restrictions on where Social Security numbers can be stored and shared-)
 - National ID number, passport number or Visa permit number
 - Driver's license number
 - Bank and credit/debit card numbers
 - Tax information (e.g., W-2, W-4, 1099)
 - Telephone number
 - Email address
 - PII when combined with other information-
 - Disability information
 - Race and/or ethnicity
 - Gender

- The location of an individual at a particular time
- Web sites visited
- Materials downloaded
- Any other information reflecting preferences and behaviors of an individual

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Data Governance Committee will be comprised of two primary groups – the Executive Group and the Working Group. This model distributes policy recommendations and decision-making responsibilities. Members of the Executive Group are selected because of their unique role within the organization and the perspective they provide. These members will not be required to actively participate in working groups, but rather advise on program progress, priorities, and policy. They will play an active role in setting goals and objectives to ensure that committee efforts remain in line with City priorities. The Executive Group is meant to serve in a steering or advisory role by providing unique perspectives and technical knowledge as it relates to their area of expertise. Members of this group might include but are not limited to City Manager’s Office staff, City Attorney, Executive Directors, Communications staff, Data & Innovation Director, Information Technology, Data & Security Director, and other particularly data heavy department staff.

Working Group members are selected because of their proximity to data in their respective departments, industry knowledge, or interest in participation. These members will form several working groups to complete specific governance tasks and initiatives throughout the What Works Cities certification process and beyond. Members of these groups will play an active role in formulating policies, processes, and products in each focus area with guidance from the Executive Group, leadership from the Department of Data & Innovation, and in special cases, perspectives from the Sugar Land community. Some working groups, such as the Data Steward group, are formed via appointment from their directors and are permanent in nature, whereas other work groups are formed on an ad hoc basis and membership is voluntary.

MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

City Manager

The City Manager and City elected officials serve an important role by championing the

effort to become a data-driven organization. While they may not play an active role on the Data Governance Committee, their public and organizational endorsement of the work being done will be instrumental in increasing buy-in and participation.

Executive Team Member

The Executive Team member overseeing the Department of Data & Innovation will provide executive oversight and accountability for the What Works Cities initiative and the data related efforts to come. They will directly supervise the Department and the Director, champion the efforts throughout the organization, and serve on the Data Governance Committee as an executive group member.

Director of Data & Innovation

The Director of Data & Innovation will be responsible for implementing data governance practices and policies. The Director will manage the data inventory, lead data quality improvement efforts, and oversee the Data Governance Committee. They will also oversee the creation of a citywide data strategy and implementation of any associated action items. Finally, the Director is responsible for ensuring all data strategy and governance practices are in alignment with City priorities.

**The City Manager, Executive Team member, and Director of Data & Innovation will authorize and have the final sign off on policies and formal procedures produced by the DGC.*

Data Stewards (Department POCs)

Data stewards will be designated for each department as primary points of contact and accountability for their respective departments. These individuals should have business knowledge of the data and can answer questions about the databases, datasets, or information systems used within the department. General responsibilities will include inventorying departmental datasets, assessing data quality, updating and maintaining open data portal entries related to their department, and implementing data governance policies and procedures across their respective departments. Data stewards will serve on the Data Governance Committee as Working Group members. They are required to participate in the Data Inventory and Performance Analytics working groups, with opportunities to participate in additional working groups if they choose.

**In the case that a designated data steward separates from the organization, goes on extended leave, or becomes unable to fulfill their duties, it is the responsibility of the department to designate a new data steward.*

Data Custodian and/or Engineer

The data custodian(s) and engineers will serve as a technical expert in data and data architecture solutions. Custodian(s) will ensure safe custody, transport, and storage of data.

Department of Data & Innovation

This team will be the full-time staff dedicated to leading initiative efforts. They will facilitate Data Governance Committee meetings, track project progress, lead working groups, and complete reporting and assessment requirements to achieve and maintain certification. This team will receive direct guidance from the executive group of the DGC and City leadership. They will also serve as subject matter experts for DGC working groups and points of contact for any questions or concerns about citywide data initiatives.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Data Governance Committee will be officially established at the release of this charter in Spring 2023 and the inaugural members will be selected subsequently. The Executive Group will convene bimonthly. These meetings will consist of program updates, presentations from Working Group projects, and advisory comments from the Executive Group. Additionally, the Working Group members of the committee will meet as needed to review timelines, project progress, and troubleshoot roadblocks.

Focus areas of the Committee include, but are not limited to, citywide data strategy, data inventory and quality, open data, performance analytics, data privacy, training and curriculum, and data infrastructure. These focus areas will be reviewed at least annually and will be modified according to needs identified across the organization. This charter is to be viewed as a living document and will be reviewed by the Data Governance Committee annually to ensure it remains aligned with organizational goals. Any member of the Data Governance Committee may propose an amendment to this Charter. A proposed amendment must be submitted in writing to the Director of Data & Innovation, who will distribute it to the Executive Group for review. The Executive Group will review the proposed amendment and communicate any comments to the Director of Data & Innovation for final approval. The Director will make a decision within 90 days of receiving the proposed amendment. The amendment will become effective as of the date of the Director's signed approval.