

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE November 5, 2021

TO Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee

SUBJECT **Removal of Victim Data from the Dallas Open Data Portal**

Background

On August 18, 2021, DBI [briefed the City Council](#) on its efforts to rebuild the [Dallas Open Data Portal](#). During the rebuilding process, Office of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence (DBI) raised concerns about published crime victim data. Subsequent conversations with law enforcement partners and research of other open data portals across the country validated the staff's concerns. On October 14, 2021, DBI removed all Dallas Police Department Victim/Reporting/Witness Personally Identifying Information (PII) data from the Open Data Portal. On October 15, DBI sent a memo to Council with intent to make council aware of the redaction of crime victim data from the Open Data Portal.

The purpose of this memo is to inform the Public Safety Committee of our intent to continue this protection of sensitive data on the Dallas Open Data Portal. The following recommendations are intended to increase resident and officer safety and to align with industry standards regarding publishing sensitive data.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1 - Redact Personally Identifying Information (PII) from all public safety data files currently published on the Dallas Open Data Portal

- To increase safety and security of victims and their families.
- To decrease the stress and trauma of victims, potential retaliation, and revictimization.
- To help prevent perpetrators of crimes from targeting witnesses or reporting individuals and opening them up to reprisals.
- To help preserve the integrity of criminal investigations.

Recommendation #2 - Delay publishing data on Active Police Calls by at least 24 hours

- To increase safety and security of first responders and help prevent officers from being targeted or ambushed while working on an active crime scene.
- To help prevent bystanders from interfering at active crime scenes and help preserve the integrity of evidence and investigations.
- To align with several other cities that adhere to data publishing best practices and do not publish real-time active police call data (please refer to the attached table)

Recommendation #3 - Remove all other PII from the Dallas Open Data Portal

- To increase safety and security of our residents and public.
- To help prevent other crimes such as identity theft from occurring.
- To discourage any other form of unauthorized use of PII information

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- The Freedom of Information Act and the Texas Public Information Act do not mandate the publishing of PII data.

Increased open data requests could be a potential impact of these recommendations. However, since staff redacted victim-related data from the Dallas Open Data Portal on October 14, 2021, there have been no open data requests made on the redacted data. We will continue to monitor any increase in open data requests caused by recommended data redactions.

Additionally, none of cities certified by the What Works Cities (WWC) program publish victim names and most of them do not publish any police data related PII. The City of Dallas is currently working towards WWC certification. What Works Cities is considered the national standard of excellence for data-driven, well-managed local governments consisting of 40 certified cities across the country, including four Texas cities (Arlington, Austin, Irving, and San Antonio).

The attached table shows what other cities are doing in relation to the recommendations staff is proposing. The cities listed are certified under WWC and one other Texas city.

The City of Dallas is committed to protecting sensitive data and adhering to best data practices. It is important that we remove sensitive data from the Dallas Open Data Portal to help ensure the safety and security of our residents and employees. If the City Council would like a full briefing on this matter, staff would be pleased to provide one.

Should you have any questions or concerns please reach out to Dr. Brita Andercheck, Director of the Office of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence, at Brita.Andercheck@DallasCityHall.com.



Dr. Brita Andercheck, Director
Office of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
[Attachment]

c:	T.C. Broadnax, City Manager Chris Caso, City Attorney Mark Swann, City Auditor Billerae Johnson, City Secretary Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager	Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion Directors and Assistant Directors
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Table: What Public Safety and PII Data is Published on What Works Cities Open Data Portals

City	Active Police Calls/Incidents Published	Victim PII Data Published	Arrestee/Perpetrator PII Crime Data Published
Dallas, TX – Not WWC	✓	✓	✓
Houston, TX – Not WWC	✓ Traffic incidents only	X	X
WWC - Platinum			
Los Angeles, CA	X	X	X
Louisville, KY	X	X	X
WWC - Gold			
Arlington, TX	X	X	✓
Austin, TX	X	X	X
Cambridge, MA	X	X	X
Chattanooga, TN	X	X	X
Detroit, MI	X	X	X
Gilbert, AZ	X	X	X
Kansas City, MO	X	X	X
Memphis, TN	X	X	X
Phoenix, AZ	X	X	X
San Francisco, CA	X	X	X
Seattle, WA	X	X	X
Tempe, AZ	X	X	X
Washington, DC	X	X	X
WWC - Silver			
Baton Rouge, LA	X	✓	X
Bellevue, WA	X	X	X
Boston, MA	X	X	X

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City	Active Police Calls/Incidents Published	Victim PII Data Published	Arrestee/Perpetrator PII Crime Data Published
Boulder, CO	X	X	X
Charlotte, NC	X	X	X
Cincinnati, OH	X	X	X
Fort Collins, CO	X	✓	X
Glendale, AZ	X	X	X
Irving, TX	X	X	✓
Little Rock, AR	X	✓	X
Madison, WI	X	✓	✓
Mesa, AZ	X	X	X
Minneapolis, MN	X	X	X
New Orleans, LA	X	X	X
Norfolk, VA	X	X	✓
Philadelphia, PA	X	X	X
Portland, OR	X	X	X
San Antonio, TX	✓	X	X
San Diego, CA	X	X	X
San Jose, CA	X	X	X
Scottsdale, AZ	X	X	X
South Bend, IN	X	X	X
Syracuse, NY	X	X	X
Topeka, KS	X	X	X
Tulsa, OK	X	X	X

✓ (yes)

X (no)