



What Works Cities |  SUNLIGHT FOUNDATION

TACTICAL DATA ENGAGEMENT (BETA)

Open Data + People + Action = Impact

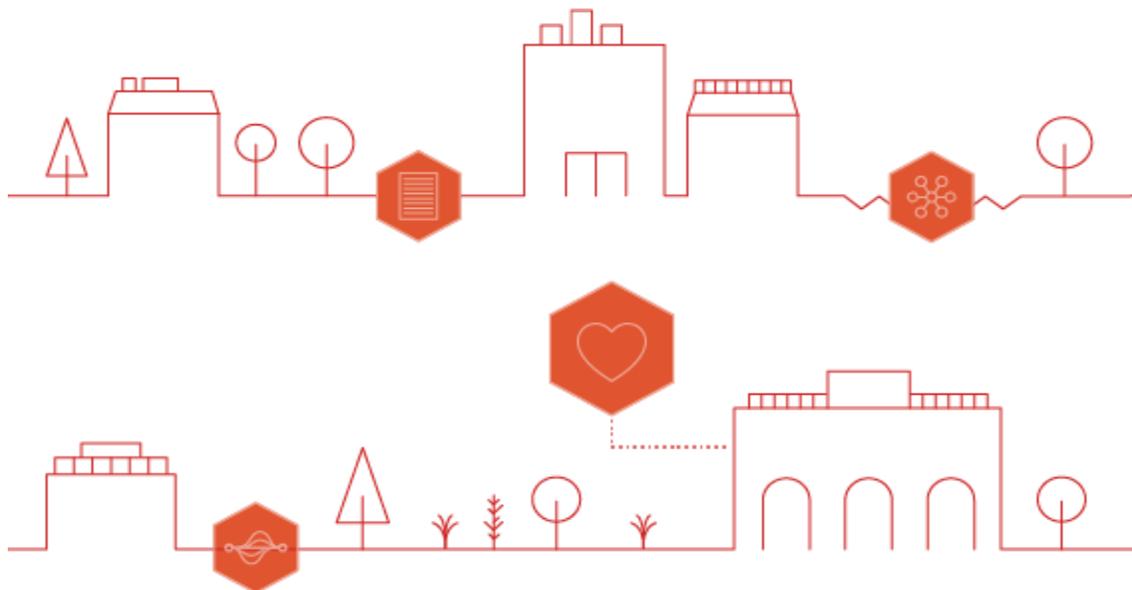
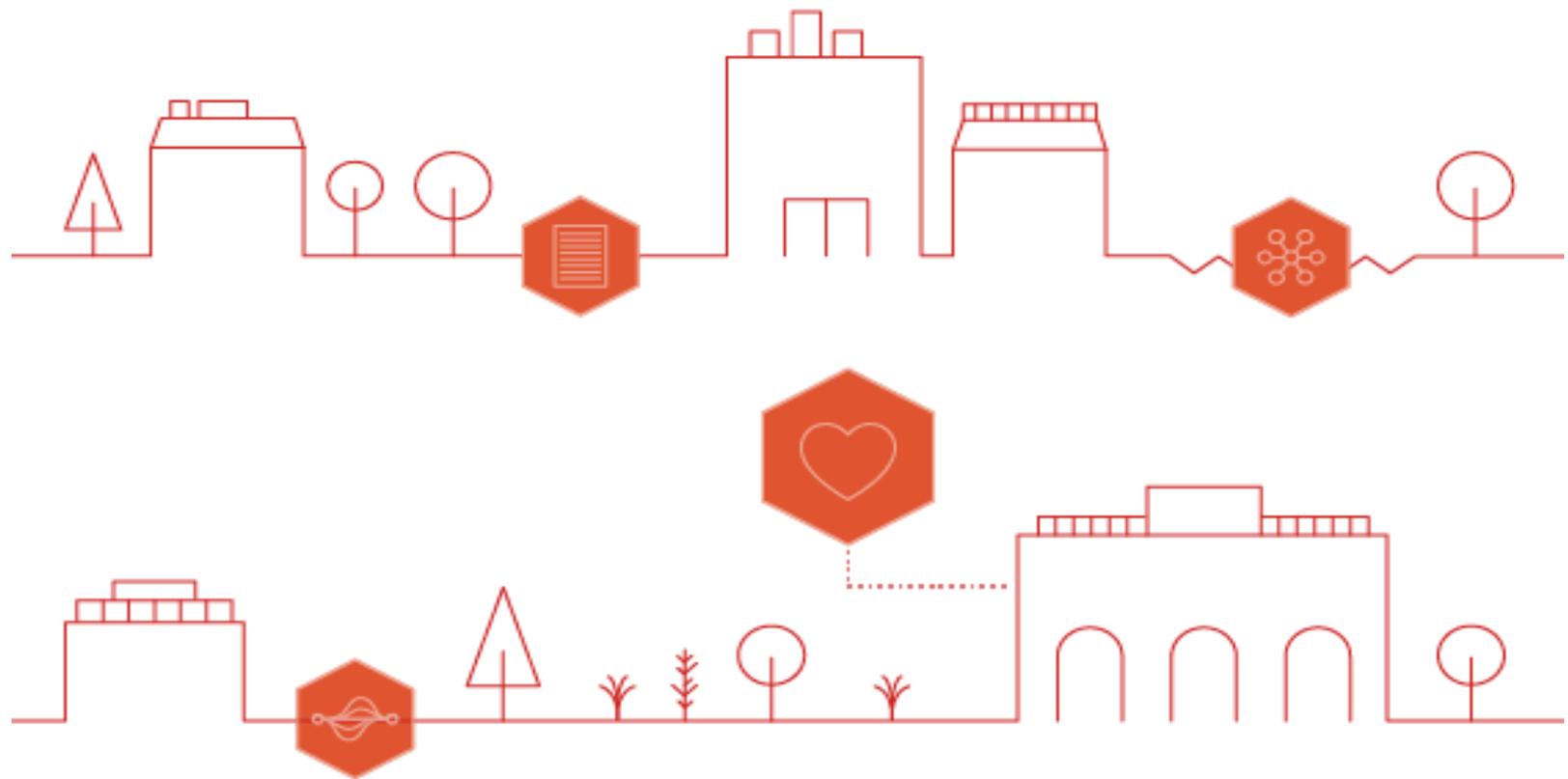


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PT. 1

INTRODUCTION

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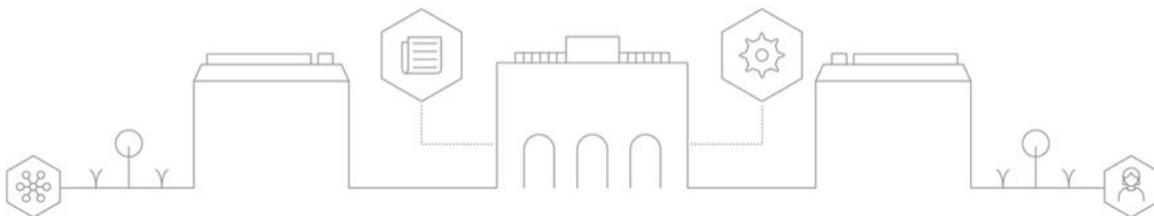
About this guide...

This guide puts forth a vision for **Tactical Data Engagement**, an approach that unites city open data with the people and pathways for action that can best address expressed local needs. Tactical Data Engagement requires that cities recognize the value of leveraging stakeholder expertise alongside data, particularly when seeking to address issues that most directly involve and affect community residents. The ideology behind this approach relies on the notion that residents are experts in their own lives, and that this expertise can and should inform the use of open data. In every case, the Tactical Data Engagement approach requires that cities work with external partners, from local universities, to community advocates, to civic technologists, and to residents themselves.

By harnessing residents' experiences to drive the sharing of open data and inform its use, cities can make data-driven decisions to drive impact on shared goals. While cities may have varying motivations for pursuing Tactical Data Engagement, from improving general engagement processes to meeting departmental goals through innovation, its ultimate impact always lives with community residents.

“No other expertise can substitute for locality knowledge”

Jane Jacobs



The Challenge

Many cities have built open data portals or enacted policies as part of open data initiatives. These efforts have fostered and proliferated *access* to city data. However, to fully meet their goals, cities need to turn their sights beyond access alone. Most open data initiatives, after all, aim for public stakeholders to use data productively. Cities want to do more with their data by enlisting the help of community actors, and, most importantly, they want open data to have an impact. An open data policy or portal on its own won't necessarily bring out these goals. It's clear cities need to go further.

The Opportunity

Cities need strategies for leveraging open data to activate and empower community practitioners, residents, and data users to take action. Since the beginning of the What Works Cities project, the Sunlight Foundation has worked with nearly 50 US City Halls to enact open data policies, and has tracked open data policy in over 100 cities, counties, and states nationwide. We've worked closely with cities tracking their best practices for engaging users around data and want to join those insights with actionable steps for cities to follow in pursuit of successful data outreach. Our hope is to revolutionize the way city halls use open data. The Sunlight Foundation seeks to provide technical assistance to cities to enable solutions that leverage transparency and open data to tackle collaboratively identified community challenges.

We designed **Tactical Data Engagement** to help cities go beyond simply making data *legally* or *technically* public to actually connecting open data efforts to the community actors who can help advance common goals.

What is Tactical Data Engagement?

It's an adaptable framework that cities can use regardless of experience level with data or technology. This strategy contains clear steps in the form of [an engagement process](#), [use cases](#), and a [taxonomy of tactics](#) that align with two discrete phases of the process, the framing phase and the action phase. Cities can follow the process steps outlined in this guide by deploying one or more of a broad range of tactics demonstrated to be effective in driving toward open data outcomes via community participation.

TACTICAL

adjective · tac·ti·cal · \ˈtak-ti-kəl\

The approach is pragmatic and focused on impact that is tangible in the here and now, embracing a “quick-and-dirty” minimum viable product (MVP) possible within the constraints of existing or realistic community capacity that can create incremental or even temporary improvement to be iterated and built upon, as opposed to an expensive, or impossible “perfect” solution. Tactical data engagement is not a cookie-cutter “one-size-fits-all” approach.

DATA

noun · da·ta \ˈdā-tə, ˈda- also ˈdä-\

The approach is empirical, driven by data and evidence, qualitative and quantitative. A technological solution need not be the end-result of a Tactical Data Engagement, but ideally data catalyses the project or initiative, providing a missing ingredient that empowers community actors to more effectively advance community goals.

ENGAGEMENT

noun · en·gage·ment · \in-ˈgāj-mənt, en-\

The approach is collaborative and people first: it is informed by local knowledge, it leverages and equally values community assets (labor, expertise, lived experience, resources) outside of city hall to not only create impact, but to do so in a way that fosters trust and embeddedness within community social networks. This approach explicitly commits to the sharing of decision making power and encourages community ownership and participation. A Tactical Data Engagement open data project is a project done [with, not for](#) community stakeholders.

The process was born out of a combination of community engagement and human-centered design best practices. The process is an actionable how-to for successful Tactical Data Engagement. A data engagement tactic is anything that helps city hall work *with* community stakeholders to make the city better with data. The tactics are the tools that allow cities to take a lightweight approach to engagement with an opportunity to iterate and hone efforts with a culture of centering city problem-solving with residents.

Ours is a deliberate approach that requires that cities work with community stakeholders to define shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration with data, including to deploy data engagement tactics. In our vision, cities should incorporate feedback and embrace a shared understanding of success with their partners.



PT. 2

HOW-TO

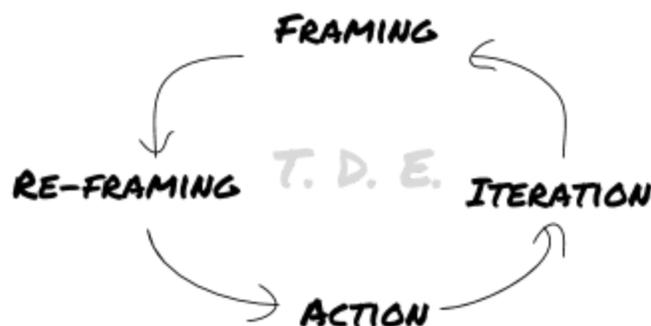
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The Process

The Tactical Data Engagement process can be broken into two distinct phases, a *framing phase* and an *action phase*. Each step we outline is flexible in nearly every sense of the word. We believe cities should experiment with the chronology and implementation of each part of this process. For example, each step's completion can be driven by city officials, residents, or a combination of both. Any tactic (for each respective phase, outlined later in this guide) can be deployed to meet each step's goals. We built flexibility into our model's design so that any city, regardless of its capacity or experience level with open data can lead a Tactical Data Engagement project.

The *framing phase* of our process identifies steps that will help cities craft a problem statement in the open with a resolute commitment to using open data as a conduit for inclusivity and social equity. Some cities with limited capacity may pause after the framing phase to plan for the action phase. The *action phase* requires cities to take direct collaborative action to connect city data to locally driven outcomes.

There are a few prerequisites to starting this process. The most important prerequisite is that cities understand and commit to identifying and understanding the needs of partners and communities outside city walls. We understand that in some cases collaborating may be a challenge due to political or financial barriers. However, we believe the [tactics](#) in this guide allow for enough flexibility to make implementation easy and replicable for continuous improvement. This process is built so that once completed in the context of a specific issue or problem, you can start again with new problem statements or tactics, ensuring that you're able to iteratively work toward more inclusive solutions to local issues. The result will be a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability that leads to civic impact through open data and data-driven problem solving.



THE FRAMING PHASE

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1. *Develop a problem statement*

You'll need to frame the opportunity and the relevant context by developing a realistic problem statement after assessing city priorities and capacity. You may want to use a [framing tactic](#) starting in this or any following framing phase step. This step requires formalizing internal interests and determining which resources and capacities the city is willing to contribute to a collaborative project with stakeholders. The result will be a problem statement developed by city project members. Guide conversations with staff keeping in mind the goals listed below.

Formulating a hypothesis for a problem statement is the key to beginning a process that will lead to meaningful community collaboration with open data. This initial hypothesis will be refined in the next step using feedback from stakeholders themselves, so focus on framing the answer to each question as the city's hypothesis.

Goal: Agree on a problem statement that answers these questions.

- What is the problem area?
- Who are the relevant city departments and staff?
- Who are the relevant community stakeholders?
 - Those with subject matter expertise?
 - Those with tech/data expertise?
 - Those with local context expertise (those who will be impacted)
- What are the relevant datasets from the city perspective?
 - To understanding the problem?
 - To measuring the problem?
- What will success or progress in this work look like?

2. *Embrace the dialogue*

After framing your problem statement from the city perspective, communicate the opportunity for collaboration to relevant community stakeholders and organizations. At this stage in the Tactical Data Engagement process, cities should enter collaborative conversations

with a mindset of exploration and facilitation rather than with the intention to mine information or serve process-driven interests. This step should allow residents to uniquely identify local needs or suggest revisions based on technical skills, subject matter expertise, or equally if not more important local knowledge and lived experience.

The result of this step should include the completion of interviews, surveys, focus groups, or public events with community stakeholders. Cities will find that by opening their doors to collaborative problem definition, and by confining conversations to the discussion of a problem statement or target issue area, they may gain specific insights that can focus and define the real needs of the issue as originally imagined. This feedback will ultimately inform a redesign/reframing of the opportunity for open data collaboration in the next step. The key to this process is revisiting the same relevant guiding questions from step 1 with community stakeholders.

Goal: Revise the problem statement based on community-driven concerns to answer these revised prompts [from step 1](#).

- What is the resident-confirmed problem area?
- Who are the new relevant city departments and staff?
 - How can community stakeholders can plug in with these departments/staff?
- Who are the relevant community stakeholders? How will they participate?
 - Those with subject matter expertise?
 - Those with tech/data expertise?
 - Those with local context expertise (those who will be impacted)
- What are the resident-confirmed relevant datasets?
 - To understanding the problem?
 - To measuring the problem?
- What will success or progress for the community look like?

3. Update your tactical plan

It is not enough to simply gather feedback from stakeholders; city officials must next incorporate this feedback into a reframing and redesign of the collaborative opportunity. This redesign will lay the foundation of a successful data collaboration in which stakeholders feel equally invested.

This step should mark the completion of a successful framing phase through the adoption of a final problem statement. In the most straightforward cases, feedback may indicate that

datasets not currently shared as open data could enable community residents to use data to solve a particular issue and advance their mission. In more complex cases, redesign may involve more expansive planning that may seem out of reach for day-to-day city operations, for example: breaking new ground on public-private partnerships; developing and implementing new technologies with local community hacker groups; or implementing non-technical program changes.

Let this step be a moment in the process at which you begin thinking about ways to match your problem statement to action tactics that could be implemented in the upcoming *action phase* based on the resident feedback gathered in [step two](#).

Goal: Understand the bottom line of an issue facing your community. Formally adopt a problem statement as a dedicated, resident-informed city goal. The final problem statement should:

- Identify a specific issue within a broader outcome area
- Name the departments and staff connected to the outcome area
- Communicate residents' involvement in crafting the city goal
- Commit to recognizing key metrics for the given issue
- Open the problem statement for public comment
- [Optional] Identify next steps or a commitment to the action phase

THE ACTION PHASE

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4. *Implement with*

With the problem area defined and framed and the opportunity for data collaboration redesigned to leverage community expertise, the next step is to address the city's challenge identified and planned for in the framing phase. Implementing an [action tactic](#) may require developing a tool or resource, or it may mean using existing resources in a new way. What's important is that the implementation connects to community need identified in [step 1](#), workshopped in [step 2](#), and verified/refined in [step 3](#) above, and that the implementation is done together with stakeholders.

Each of the action tactics is centered around an effort that requires active stakeholder engagement with city data around an identified issue. Unlike any step in the framing phase, this step in the action phase centers exclusively around implementing an action tactic.

Goal: Employ an action tactic alongside residents by adapting it to your city's capacity using available human, data, and technical resources. Answer these questions.

- Who will be the city champion to shepherd this project?
- How can I secure funding for this project?
- Who are my internal stakeholders who can make this work?
- Who are my external stakeholders who can make this work?
- How can I document what I'm doing to prepare for iteration/replication?

5. Measure success

After implementing an action toward a community-informed solution in step four, it is critical that city officials verify and measure impact. Questions of what success means, what it will look like, and how it should be measured were discussed in [step 1](#) and workshopped with community experts in [step 2](#). Ideally, project teams should work to identify a public dataset that can measure success with the intention to track and share realistic markers of progress in the open or with stakeholders involved. Measuring success is [performance analysis](#) that may include tracking key neighborhood indicators generated by city data or gathering and tracking new qualitative data by interviewing key stakeholders. In either case, open data collaboration is only effective and sustainable when cities can show impact through demonstrable, concrete metrics.

6. Iterate

Tactical Data Engagement processes result in small scale interventions by design; they are quick and dirty “minimum viable products” to connect community actors to the information needed to address public challenges. By its very nature, this process is intended to be iterated upon to continue to drive community-informed incremental improvements to an open data program. With each replication and iteration, more community groups are brought into the open data process and more opportunities are created for open data to drive impact. Therefore, we recommend that cities plan for a process and culture of continued Tactical Data Engagement.



(Kristina Alexanderson/[Flickr](#))

PT. 3

CASES

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Demonstrating Tactical Data Engagement

The following cases demonstrate the process described in the section above and incorporate a few of the replicable tactics that we've isolated as minimum viable solutions for cities to use when using Tactical Data Engagement.

The case studies answer the question, "What does Tactical Data Engagement look like?"

It looks like projects, programs, and initiatives that intensively mirror the following basic structure:

City leaders frame a shared community challenge and invite community actors with relevant subject matter or local expertise to stake a claim in addressing that challenge through public data, thoughtfully shared. The use of public data, paired with stakeholder feedback and/or concrete contributions, results in tangible impact on the community or benefit to residents.

To pare down this structure, we form this sentiment into a model with the following basic characteristics:

- (1) City department or specific person at city works with
- (2) specific community actors like nonprofits, residents, or businesses,
- (3) including by thoughtfully sharing relevant data,
- (4) to address a shared community challenge
- (5) resulting in tangible progress/impact/benefit for residents.

Projects that best captured the soul of Tactical Data Engagement inevitably fit this model. This is the guiding feeling behind how to know successful data engagement when you see it. The cases highlighted in this guide show the results of years, sometimes decades, of work to engage communities with local government through data. We analyzed these cases to come up with the tactics that make our process so adaptable to implement. Every city, regardless of its unique needs, can use a tactic to replicate a version of the projects described below to suit the individual needs of unique localities.

Food Safety in King County

Data Restaurant ratings, incidence of foodborne illness

People King County's Public Health Department, restaurant owners, community leaders, health inspectors, residents

Action Informing resident decision-making and decreasing health risks

King County's Public Health Department is reducing the risk of foodborne illness by analyzing and sharing restaurant ratings data based extensively on feedback from restaurant owners and community stakeholders.



(Public Health Department - King County)

Starting in January 2017, the Public Health Department of King County, WA – which includes Seattle and many of its suburbs – began sharing a [revamped set of restaurant ratings](#) complete with new resident-informed signage in restaurant windows developed from conversations with restaurant owners, community members, restaurant inspectors, and health experts. The Department employed **innovative low-tech strategies** like working groups and quick surveys to get resident input on how to best improve restaurant ratings' accessibility to the public, thereby reducing the risk of foodborne illness. Embracing the idea that the best idea is often the simplest one, the Department is meeting restaurant-goers and residents where they are by using physical signs, meetings, and basic texting technology connect communities to data.

In launching the ratings system’s redevelopment, the Public Health Department “[gathered recommendations, priorities and concerns](#)” from restaurant operators, food safety experts, diverse language speaking communities and communities of color” early in their project through stakeholder working groups that would continue after the new data release. They unearthed issues like [inconsistency among restaurant inspectors](#) and incorporated those findings into their ratings analysis. Then, the Department asked residents to review via online survey a set of [new, easy-to-understand signs](#) to display health ratings in restaurants’ windows. From over 3,500 responses, the Department determined that residents preferred to see signs with emojis due to the diversity of languages spoken in King County’s communities.

EARLIER DRAFTS

FINAL DESIGN

Public Health
Seattle & King County

FOOD SAFETY RATING

This business has received a food safety rating of:

EXCELLENT

Possible ratings:

NEEDS TO IMPROVE OKAY GOOD EXCELLENT

For more information, text:
 更多資訊, 請發送簡訊: 468311
 如需查詢, 請發送簡訊: 468311
 如需查詢, 請發送簡訊: 468311
 如需查詢, 請發送簡訊: 468311
 text: king food @ 468311

Business name: _____
 Permit #: _____ Date: _____

Patty Hayes, RN, MN,
 Director of Public Health -
 Seattle & King County

www.kingcounty.gov/FoodSafetyRating

ONLINE SURVEY AND COMMUNITY FAVORITE: OPTION C

FOOD SAFETY RATING

EXCELLENT

“Make the sign’s title more clear and simple.”
We took out the magnifying glass and utensil graphic. We also changed the colored text to black.

“Make the Public Health logo larger to clearly mark the window sign as an official Public Health document.”
We enlarged our logo to clearly mark the window sign as an official Public Health document.

“It is difficult to differentiate between the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Fair’ categories.”
We changed the “Needs to Improve” category to gray to make the sign more accessible to people who are color blind.

“Use emojis with more expressive faces.”
We looked through many different emojis to find simple and emotive faces.

“The words ‘text message’ don’t directly translate in some languages.”
We added an image of a cell phone to make the action clear.

“The definition of ‘Fair’ and ‘Needs Improvement’ are unclear to many people. ‘Okay’ and ‘Needs to Improve’ are easier for people to understand.”
We changed the category names to “Okay” and “Needs to Improve.”

1701_6588w_window_sign_design_no_title.ai

([Public Health Department - King County](#))

In addition to leveraging technology to open channels of communication, the Department plans to continue engaging community members by holding [quarterly stakeholder meetings](#) and posting a number for residents to text on physical ratings signs if they're looking for more information or the raw data itself. The key to the success of this groundbreaking work was to combine a data-driven local government effort, providing ratings data to protect against foodborne illness, with consistent communication with stakeholders through guerilla data engagement strategies. The Department successfully adapted their ratings system to meet resident needs by committing to data enagement and open communication, thus ensuring a stronger impact on the Department's goal of decreasing foodborne illness in the future.

Housing Stabilization in Cleveland

Data *Linked code violations and other property data*

People *City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Poverty Center at Case Western and CDCs*

Action *Tracking bad housing conditions and stabilizing neighborhoods*

A CDC was able to create quality housing and evict negligent landlords in the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood using property data from city partners.

(Jakprints/[Flickr](#))

Since 2008, the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, a CDC in Cleveland's Detroit Shoreway neighborhood, [saved nearly 180 single-family homes](#) from demolition and undertook data-driven efforts to identify and evict negligent housing owners. To do this, the Detroit Shoreway CDO leveraged high-quality city and county property data [linked across geographies by the Poverty Center at Case Western University](#). The linked data was crucial for identifying and taking action against landlords who owned multiple properties and had multiple code violations. But the data was only linked because the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County engaged a **trusted university partner** with sophisticated data capacity to process their raw open data and connect the data to community needs.



For the City of Cleveland, providing open data on permits, code violations, ownership history, and more was a key first step for beginning work with the Poverty Center on their neighborhood data tool called [NEO CANDO](#). Any community organization, in this case the Detroit Shoreway CDO, could log onto the tool and see data on a single property in a single search -- a task that used to take hours to complete when data was disaggregated by city or county department and was much less effective for [identifying problem housing owners](#). The Poverty Center was a research organization outside of government with highly sophisticated

data capacity and had worked with local community organizations before, which is a characteristic of intermediary partners with particular value to government agencies.

The city and county shared data with the Poverty Center as a trusted university partner so that they might identify community connections and incorporate their needs into data processing thus adding value to basic property data. The Poverty Center could then put high-quality data into the hands of users like the Detroit Shoreway CDO to support ongoing community development efforts. Without the city's engagement of this trusted partner, the Detroit Shoreway CDO would not have been able to take effective, impactful action against vacancy and poor housing conditions to benefit residents of the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood.



*Houses in the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood
(Ray Dehler/[Flickr](#))*

Community Policing in Chicago

Data Neighborhood crime statistics, resident-provided 311 data

People Chicago Police Department and community members

Action Empowering residents and solving public safety issues as they arise



*Police Accountability Task Force community meeting in February 2016
(Daniel O'Neil/[Flickr](#))*

Officers and residents generated policing strategies that suited community needs by discussing crime data at community meetings and leveraging Chicago's 311 system.

Police officers in Chicago have been meeting with community residents in their service areas to discuss crime statistics and adjust their policing goals for over 20 years, and they are now seeking data-driven improvements to the original innovative program. Chicago has long been at the forefront of community policing, [launching Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy \(CAPS\), its community policing unit, in 1993](#) as a response to demonstrated need for

community-driven solutions in policing in Chicago and nationwide. CAPS, in its original form, began grounding conversations between residents and police officers in data; police officers arrived at meetings with a [“top ten” set of crime charts](#) to discuss with local stakeholders. By allowing data to base **community problem-solving** in evidence and by asking residents to lend their unique insights on idiosyncratic challenges that affect policing strategy, Chicago’s Police Department has over time intended to understand a broader swath of issues affecting residents than would be possible through traditional policing techniques.

As part of the work, police officers found that many of residents’ expressed concerns resembled 311 service requests. Officers began gathering these concerns as qualitative data and entering them in Chicago’s [311 system](#) so that they could be tracked to completion. For example, if officers shared data with residents on illegal drug activity in their neighborhood, residents may identify their concerns about a specific abandoned building. Then officers could log infrastructural or property ownership concerns from residents and respond to achievable requests for building improvement by logging a request form. As of 2014, police accounted for [3 to 4 percent of service requests filled](#), a task usually left to Public Works and 311 service providers. One officer said he supplied about 100 service requests every day he was in the field after this function was built into the CAPS program.

Chicago’s case rightly demonstrates that *open* data, in the form of 311 requests and crime statistics, should be at the center of engaging residents around policing strategy, particularly because the solutions to reducing crime numbers [actually rely on meeting communities’ needs](#). While this project was innovative in its conception, Chicago’s Police Department has recognized that there is room to grow. A [set of recommendations](#) provided by Chicago’s Police Accountability Task Force in April 2016 suggests that data sharing be improved further by asking that crime incidents be reported through the city’s open data portal. However, as in years past, open data will not be the sole solution to tensions between residents and police. Like so many social issues, the answers to Chicago’s policing challenges lie with residents, and data serves as a conduit for actionable solutions grounded in good information and evidence.

Public Transit Use in Portland

- Data** *Transit authority data*
- People** *Portland's TriMet transit authority, Google*
- Action** *Improving transportation access and use*



(City of Portland / [Flickr](#))

By facing a technical data challenge head-on with experts as partners, TriMet was able to reach a trove of Google Maps users and improve public transit use in Portland.

In 2005, a team of engineers from Google and staff from Portland's TriMet transit authority led by IT Manager Bibiana McHugh began work on a data standard that would allow open transit data to flow into Google Maps in real-time. Though most of us take the technology for granted today, the development of the Google Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) was completely [unprecedented in the field of open transit data](#) and required a confluence of open data, engagement, and action. Because Portland was already on board with open data

principles when McHugh first had the idea for this project, executing the schema on existing transit data and sharing it with Google's developers was not a major political barrier. Then, experts at Google were able to co-create new technology alongside the city's IT department and the GTFS data standard was born.

McHugh had the idea for what became GTFS because she saw a fundamental issue with TriMet's existing open data practices with transit data. Data is essential for helping residents to plan a trip using public transit. However, Portland didn't have the technical capacity to create a comprehensive transportation mapping tool, nor a wide enough audience to significantly impact how residents moved throughout the city. By reaching out to her network of research contacts and eventually landing in a partnership with Google, McHugh opened TriMet's doors to the co-creation of a service that would take transit data to a site where users were already engaged.

Tapping local tech talent to assist with this issue was not only helpful in supplementing technical needs, but necessary for identifying users and reaching them effectively. In other cases, this may look like adopting open source technology or engaging civic hackers. In McHugh's case, reaching out to subject matter experts in the field of transportation led to a connection that provided the skills and audience that TriMet needed to increase the use of public transit. Since Portland's initial effort, Google has improved resident access to public transit around the world by adopted partnerships with over [100 transit providers nationwide and 400 globally](#).

Teen Sexual Health in Washington

Data *Neighborhood data, resident insights*

Partners *Public housing residents, researchers, Department of Housing and Urban Development, DC Housing Authority*

Action *Improving Public Housing Authority's housing and social services*

Researchers in Washington, DC were able to focus the DC Housing Authority's services to meet community needs by combining public data with input from service recipients at an in-person data walk.

Researchers from the Urban Institute facilitated a [data walk in 2014](#) for residents of the Benning Terrace neighborhood in Washington, DC as part of the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety project. While the Urban Institute team had been [analyzing HUD data](#) to direct DCHA on potential service improvements, they decided to supplement their analysis with an in-person data walk to mine real feedback from teen residents of local public housing to target teen sexual health issues. At the data walk, residents perused visual aids like graphs, charts, or quotes posted around a room, providing feedback at each station on whether they thought the data about their community was accurate, complete, or helpful to know. Improving the quality of quantitative data by combining it with resident input and community engagement was crucial for creating a comprehensive evidence base that could accurately inform DCHA services.



(Ted Eytan / [Flickr](#))

DCHA and researchers planned and hosted the data walk with input from a steering committee consisting of subject matter experts, community residents, community leaders,

Housing Authority staff, and social service providers already working in Benning Terrace. They invited some of the [300 youth in the service area](#) and their families to participate and offer suggestions to either the actual data or its interpretation. At the event, researchers shared data on “health, substance abuse, risky behaviors, and neighborhood dynamics such as crime and victimization” with residents to spark conversation and ground-truth research on the community. They also interviewed the attendees at each station and [collected quotes](#).

Important feedback made its way back to DCHA along with data analysis on teen sexual health based on analysis by the subject matter experts. For example, one resident commented that feedback surveys that DCHA provided assumed respondents were heterosexual, which limited the information they could collect about sexual health. Other residents said that certain indicators showed data points much lower or higher than they felt they should be. Because of the collaborative way in which this form of resident engagement built upon public data, DCHA was able to provide necessary sexual health education services and reduce risk for youths in Benning Terrace by specifically focusing in on resident-identified data indicators. By combining resident input with quantitative analysis, the impact of DCHA’s services would have a particular focus on issues that matter most to its residents.



PT. 4

TACTICS

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Deploying Tactics

The focal point of the process outlined in [Pt. 2 “How-To”](#) of this guide is the deployment of lightweight tactics that cities and government agencies can use to engage residents in leveraging open data for good. This menu of framing and action tactics is an attempt to categorize projects that city agencies or public servants have tried and tested to drive community impact and empower residents using open data. Cities should be able to use this menu, select a tactic, and implement it with variations depending on local idiosyncrasies. In every case, we believe that cities should leverage the unique, local resources available to them. We believe these tactics are a minimally intrusive, yet replicable and effective way for cities to engage communities with data. Where possible, we’ve included examples of applications for each tactic, but are open to refining and updating this catalog to mirror the best practices being used in the open data community.

These tactics do not include products or developments that serve solely to improve local government processes or performance, but the byproducts of a successful Tactical Data Engagement may help cities by improving efficiency and generating innovative partnerships. Positive results for the community go hand in hand with positive results for government, including by reducing resource burdens on local governments and encouraging residents to take stake in local government initiatives.

FRAMING TACTICS

When cities set out to leverage their open data programs to address administrative or mayoral goals, they may encounter difficulty in finding and facilitating the *right* partnerships or stakeholders. When it comes to identifying and *framing* opportunities for collaboration, this menu of tactics offers cities an answer to the question “Where should I start?” Some of the tactics in this list fall under the wider umbrella of stakeholder mapping exercises and involve seeking out new or neglected partners, or underserved communities. Tactics here can be loosely applied to the framing phase steps outlined in [Pt. 2 “How-To”](#). Some of the subjects of the case studies demonstrated in [Pt. 3 “Cases”](#) used similar tactics as those described below to engage residents in the preliminary stages of their projects. As identified in the framing phase process description, these tactics should be implemented with a goal toward honing and adopting a collaboratively-identified problem statement.

TACTIC	DESCRIPTION
Participatory Problem Scoping	<p>City hosts an in-person event to develop a problem statement with residents based a shared challenge on “donated” open data from city agencies with agency staff present and breakout teams that compete to propose the most actionable and impactful problem statement.</p> <p><i>Ex. Students at the Harris School for Public Policy started an annual Civic Scope-a-thon in which local agencies or nonprofits pose general challenges and provide data to attendees, in this case students, who proposed scopes of work for future potential projects that would address the agencies’ needs and promote innovation.</i></p>
Information Demand	<p>City or city department identifies the information that is most requested or relevant to the most frequently made requests and frames an impact opportunity around the use cases driving the data requests.</p> <p><i>Ex. New York State used FOIL data requests from residents and data users to identify opportunities where opening data would reveal pathways for users to more effectively access and use data. They re-released “high value datasets” as open data.</i></p>
Use Who You’ve Got	<p>City starts in framing a collaborative opportunity for open data impact by engaging with existing external partners by focusing on new or previously unexplored data opportunities. Specifically, these existing partnerships should be those most connected to community needs and should attempt connect needs to data-driven opportunities for solutions.</p>

Data Education/Open House	City hosts trainings or open houses for residents to visit a physical space either at City Hall, City Department’s offices/location, or communal public spaces to participate in a data training and have an informal conversation about potential data improvements or data-driven solutions with city officials. This tactic demonstrates the range of opportunities to engage identified stakeholders, but requires the structure of the development of a problem statement.
Proven Dataset Use Case	City identifies datasets are not shared, or are shared but not used, and builds a problem/opportunity framing premised on these use cases, particularly when use cases for city datasets are already clear or known. This tactic can take the form of a data inventory and prioritization effort that involves community input.
Open Data Roundtables	<p>City engages data users with subject matter expertise or demonstrated interest to collect targeted feedback on open data releases and potential data use cases. Leveraging user groups or roundtables can lead to better data products and more opportunities to ensure that data meets users’ needs.</p> <p><i>Ex: Pittsburgh Data User Groups host Data 101 meetings where county officials and local research library staff are present to discuss data challenges and data capacity goals.</i></p>

ACTION TACTICS

This menu of tactics was developed based on cases demonstrated by public agencies and governments at all levels. These action tactics are intended to be used in [Step 4](#) of [Pt. 2 “How-To”](#). As for the framing tactics, the stories demonstrated in [Pt. 3 “Cases”](#) were the

inspiration for this set of action tactics, and thanks to the hard work of the subjects of those cases, we believe these tactics have been proven to work well for communities. More than the framing tactics, these action tactics are more resource-intensive, but they can and should be adapted and adjusted based on local needs and capacities.

TACTIC	DESCRIPTION
Guerilla Data Strategy	<p>City uses low-tech solutions to improve residents' experiences at physical places where they interact with government services and drive positive outcomes.</p> <p><i>Ex: King County Public Health posting new physical signage with user tested visuals and increased access to data</i></p>
Applied Problem Solving	<p>City works consistently with engaged group of stakeholders to address specific problems raised through shared examination and conversations around city data.</p> <p><i>Ex: Chicago PD using community meetings to discuss neighborhood data in effort to find resident-led solutions for crime</i></p>
Trusted Partnerships	<p>City identifies external partners with advanced data capacity and ties to community partners to process existing city open data and connect it community members or organizations.</p> <p><i>Ex: Cleveland data intermediary parsing and matching data across city/county levels and reaching out to local housing advocacy groups to encourage better landlord eviction practices and neighborhood development</i></p>
Co-creation with Civic Hackers	<p>City identifies external partners with advanced technical capacity and engages tech partners to</p>

	<p>develop a product that both meets communities' needs and brings city open data to its fullest practical potential.</p> <p><i>Ex: Portland IT department reaches out to Google programmers and collaboratively develops an innovative system for connecting city transportation data to existing, widely used tech platforms.</i></p>
<p>Data Quality Improvement</p>	<p>City undertakes extensive engagement effort to add qualitative and/or quantitative input from residents to either existing or new datasets within city government.</p> <p><i>Ex: DC Housing Authority uses data walks to collect public housing residents' input on sexual health statistics to inform new programming</i></p> <p><i>Ex: City of Riverside uses online portal for a data collection effort around stray dogs and pets to inform animal health initiatives</i></p>
<p>The "Hands-Free" Data Challenge</p>	<p>City releases specific datasets with an imperative for users to build tools, deploy solutions, or create new data products using city datasets. City promotes and encourages development among challenge participants.</p> <p><i>Ex: Boston launched the Adopt-a-Hydrant challenge which encourages residents to find local hydrants using data and an interactive map from the city to ensure that hydrants are dug out after major snowfall.</i></p>

...more to come!