

Open Austin Update



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to

**Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications
Commission**

by

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About Open Austin

- Open Austin is an all-volunteer community group founded in 2009
- We support open government, open data, and civic technology
- We are the [Code for America Brigade](#) in Austin
- Our two focus areas are *policy* and *civic hacking*
- More info at www.open-austin.org



Recent Highlights

- Produced [Open Government Briefing Guide](#) (2014)
- [Code Across Austin V](#) (Feb)
 - Generated plans for 11 civic hack projects, in areas ranging from development & land use to civic engagement
 - Pioneering use of the [Civic Tech Project Planning Canvas](#)
 - Results open sourced and posted [here](#)
- Requalified as an official [Code for America Brigade](#) (May)



Ongoing Events

- Open Gov Meetup – monthly event, typically programmed with a guest speaker on a civic topic
 - Next meetup – May 18, 6:45pm, Terrazas Branch Library, topic: *OpenStreetMap!*
- Hack Night – regular gatherings for volunteers to work on civic projects
- ATX Hack for Change – June 5-7



Near-Term Policy Focus (1/2)

- Concern: Council forum for issues now that Emerging Tech subcommittee has been disbanded
 - Need: Re-engage city council on open government and civic technology issues
- Concern: Periodic updates on the AustinGO ([Austin Government Online](#)) initiative have ceased
 - Need: Re-establish regular reporting



Near-Term Policy Focus (2/2)

- Concern: Poor visibility into city's open data initiative (*irony alert!*)
 - Need: Public engagement on open data initiative



Possible policy action:

IT procurement

- It's difficult to achieve open data objectives on our legacy enterprise systems – *let's not do that with future systems*
- Proposal: policy to require open data plan with IT procurement – *how will the public data contained within the system be provided for public access (open data, APIs)*



Possible policy action:

Mobile app implementation (1/2)

- Native mobile apps (e.g. Android, Apple) may not fully meet the community need
- Potential shortcomings:
 - Use on other platforms, e.g. public computer lab
 - Third-party terms of use and privacy concerns
 - Access to underlying public data



Possible policy action:

Mobile app implementation (2/2)

- Proposal: city policy that mobile app implementation is within a full-spectrum release
- Success example: 3-1-1
- Components:
 - Native mobile app – *Austin 3-1-1* app available in Android and Apple app stores
 - Platform-independent web app – <http://austin.spotreporters.com/>
 - API – [Open311](#)
 - Open Data – [311 Unified Data dataset](#)



Possible budget recommendations

Some new services that we'd like to see the city prioritize for funding in the next budget:

- Agenda management system that supports open data and workflow
- Issue tracking system for citizen problems and help requests (including dataset requests) relating to city technology services (a/k/a trouble ticket system)

