Feb 2018 Assessment of Arlington Adherence to Sunlight Foundation Open Data Policy Guidelines
Stephen Larrick from the Sunlight Foundation and Jaime Lees, County Process & Data Analysis Mgr reviewed each Sunlight guideline against the County's Open Data Policy and, separately, against its Open Data program. This document represents the consensus view of Arlington's current state as well as opportunities for future adherence.

#	Open Data Policy Guidance Best Practice	Open Data Policy	Open Data Program	Combined Comments from Sunlight Foundation and County Staff
1	Proactively release government information online	No	Yes	The county's open data policy does not declare data will be proactively open, or open by default. However, in November 2017 the County Manager issued guidelines directing all County departments to make information public by default and this commitment will be shared with the community via the Open Data Portal blog.
2	Reference and build on existing public accountability and access policies	Yes	Yes	The policy commits to adhere to federal, state and local laws and specifies data publication exclusions such as trademark laws and classification as confidential/sensitive information.
3	Build on the values, goals and mission of the community and government	Yes	Yes	The policy recognizes several of the specific ways that open data will benefit the community in a thoughtful and meaningful way, e.g., create economic opportunities, improve public knowledge of County business and operations, create accountability, etc.
4	Create a public, comprehensive list of all information holdings	No	Yes	The policy does not reference the in-progress inventory of datasets. However, in November 2017 the County Manager issued guidelines which direct all departments to participate in the completion of a data inventory and this commitment will be shared with the community via the Open Data Portal blog.
5	Specify methods of determining the prioritization of data release	Yes	Yes	The policy declares datasets for release will be prioritized. The prioritization approach will be posted to the Open Data Portal blog as a public commitment.
6	Stipulate that provisions apply to contractors or quasi-governmental agencies	No	No	The policy does not specify data ownership when contracting with third parties and making that data available to County and public where appropriate. Possible opportunity to update County standard contracting Terms and Conditions to require that data deemed to be public information must be readily available to the County so as to be published as open data.
7	Appropriately safeguard sensitive information	Yes	Yes	The policy specifies information not to be released in the "Data Exclusions" section, as well as in the principles section via definition of "Secure."
8	Mandate data formats for maximal technical access	Yes	Yes	The policy specifies a reliance on utilizing open data standards to make information easily available and consumable
9	Provide comprehensive and appropriate formats for varied uses	Yes	Yes	The policy specifies "alphanumeric in form", which is a mechanism for greater access, and "customer-centric", which defines the driver for how data should be released to the public.
10	Remove restrictions for accessing information	No	Yes	The policy does not state there are no restrictions to accessing the data however the Terms of Use, also posted on the Open Data Portal, indicates there are no restrictions on use, no fee and no requirement to register.
11	Mandate data be explicitly license-free	No	Yes	The policy does not state no licensing is required however the Terms of Use, also posted on the Open Data Portal, indicates no licensing is required.
12	Charge data-creating agencies with recommending an appropriate citation form	No	No	Opportunity area to develop optional but recommended standard citation language when using County open data.

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13	Require publishing metadata	No	Yes	The policy does not mandate publication of metadata however metadata publication is part of the data publication process as well as the Data Inventory initiative. An explanation of the County's position on metadata will be posted to the Open Data Portal blog as a public commitment.
14	Require publishing data creation processes	No	No	Opportunity area to commit to publishing the data lineage as metadata; some work is already being done in this space.
15	Mandate the use of unique identifiers	No	No	This guideline is highly aspirational and dependent on committed resources to associate the disparate open datasets to each other for expanded ease of use of multiple datasets simultaneously.
16	Require code sharing or publishing open source	No	No	Possible opportunity area to define data to include software/app code and that any code we develop will be open source and, where applicable, that code developed for the County will also be open source.
17	Require digitization and distribution of archival materials	No	No	This guideline is aspirational and requires close coordination with archival efforts such as scanning of historical records.
18	Create a central location devoted to data publication and policies	No	Yes	The policy does not state that open data will be published to a central location though in practice the Open Data Portal serves as this central location. Proactive opportunity to make sure open data already published in other locations gets migrated to the Open Data Portal.
19	Publish bulk data	Yes	Yes	The policy supports publishing open data via a customer-centric model and in practice, the County is publishing bulk data. Opportunity to make a written commitment to publication of bulk data in the policy.
20	Create public APIs for accessing information	Yes	Yes	The policy specifies API is provided for all datasets.
21	Optimize methods of data collection	No	Yes	The policy does not mandate the streamlining of data colleciton processes such that data is available for porting to the Open Data Portal however the County is proactive in, e.g., replacing paper with online forms and configuring applications to validate critical data fields. Opportunity to make a formal commitment to this approach in contracting for software and as process improvement, though this is not directly the purview of the open data policy.
22	Mandate ongoing data publication and updates	Yes	Yes	The policy explicitly states ongoing data pubication and maintenance of the datasets.
23	Create permanent, lasting access to data	No	No	Opportunity area to commit to data permanence (internally if not on Open Data Portal) and to define formal process for exceptions when datasets need to be removed.
24	Create or appoint oversight authority	No	No	Opportunity area to formally idenitfy someone to own open data program, make open data happen and be accountable for results.
25	Create guidance or other binding regulations for implementation	No	No	Opportunity area to formally define who the governing body reports to and accountability for commitments. Governance model with roles and responsibilities, technical standards and implementation guidelines is on-going work by internal Data Steering Group.
26	Incorporate public perspectives into policy implementation	Yes	Yes	The policy states data will be published in response to public need and the Open Data Advisory Group is a commuity engagement group specifically charged with providing public perspectives for consideration by the County.
27	Set appropriately ambitious timelines for implementation	No	Yes	The Data Inventory initiative will culminate in a list of open datasets and a schedule for publication.

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28	Create processes to ensure data quality	Yes	Yes	The policy states open data priciples for data quality will be adhered to. The County Manager has tasked all County employees with correcting data quality issues and addressing the source of data quality problems and this commitment will be shared with the community via the Open Data Portal blog.
29	Ensure sufficient funding for implementation	No	No	There is no committed funding allocation for staffing or infrastructure.
30	Create or explore potential partnerships	No	Yes	The goal of the policy implies but does not specifically state the benefit of partnering on open data. In practice, the Open Data Advisory Group is a community engagement partnership, the Data Steering Group is an internal partnership and the County has numerous internal and external collaborative teams producing open data as well as partnerships with universities to create open datasets suitable for publication from County data.
31	Mandate future review for potential changes to this policy	No	No	Easy win to add an annual review of the policy, to be performed by the Data Steering Group.
	# Yes	11	20	