

# A GUIDE TO OPEN DATA



The Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities has prepared a toolkit to help municipalities implement the Municipal Government Act in accordance with the principles of open government – accountability, accessibility and transparency. This guide has been prepared to provide Council members with information about open data.

## Examples of information that can be shared as OPEN DATA include:

- Fees collected by department by program;
- Tax revenue by month;
- Property assessment data;
- Donations to community groups;
- User or site visit data;
- Registry of approved permits by type, location and value;
- Council member remuneration and expenses;
- Map showing ward boundaries;
- Infrastructure projects showing status;
- Enforcement actions;
- Election results by ward;
- Councillor contact information.

**Some information can be shared in spreadsheets. Other information may be available as a map layer in GIS.**

**Open Data** refers to government data that is freely shared and can be used without restrictions. This is usually raw data that can be download.

When releasing data, care must be taken to protect personal information. For example, personal information should **not** be shared.

## GUIDELINES FOR SHARING DATA:

### Share primary data.

Data should be published in primary format, not a report. For example, a spreadsheet of permits could contain primary data about location and value.

### Data should be released in a timely fashion.

Data should be routinely released so that it is current.

### Data should be accessible.

Data should be easily accessible on the municipal website.

### Data should be downloadable and useable.

For example, the registry of building permits should be consistently coded – single detached house, semi-detached house, commercial building - so that the data can be analyzed. The data should be in raw form rather than a PDF so that the data can be analyzed and shared.

Technology allows citizens to access and analyze information about the municipal government elected to serve them. Open Data PEI is one group who analyzes and uses open data sources [https://www.meetup.com/Open-Data-PEI/?\\_cookie-check=39z1PVEg3iRP2qxr](https://www.meetup.com/Open-Data-PEI/?_cookie-check=39z1PVEg3iRP2qxr). While there are few examples of municipal open datasets, some PEI municipalities include details about their programs and facilities on their websites or publish reports listing approved building permits. Reformatting this information into datasets would be an easy way of starting an open data program.

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