Testimony to the New York City Council Technology Committee
On the Open Data 2018 Annual Report
October 18, 2018

Good morning Chair Koo and members of the New York City Council Technology committee. My name is Alex Camarda, and I am the Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany. Reinvent Albany advocates for transparent and accountable government across New York State. We were instrumental in drafting and passing New York City's 2012 Open Data Law and subsequent amendments. Thank you for holding this oversight hearing today on the Open Data 2018 annual report.

New York City was the first government in the world to pass an open data law. We are glad to see the de Blasio administration has made steady progress implementing the law over the years thanks especially to the work of the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics (MODA) and the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT). Thanks to the City Council's energetic oversight and efforts to continuously improve the Open Data Initiative, New York remains a world leader.

We will speak to three issues today:

First, we applaud the appointment of Kelly Jin as the new director of MODA, and the City's Chief Open Platform Officer --- essentially the head of the City's Open Data Initiative. This important post was vacant for over a year and a half, and we are glad to see the de Blasio administration has recognized its importance with this hire.

Second, Reinvent Albany supports Int. No. 1137. We testified in September before the 2019 Charter Revision Commission and called for the codification of MODA in the Charter, so we are pleased this bill will do so. MODA currently exists pursuant to Executive Order 306. We recommend amending the bill to reflect that DoITT is more of a partner with MODA in administering Open Data and DoITT participates in managing the citywide data platform known as Databridge.

Third, we have detailed comments about the Open Data 2018 Annual report and the continued progress of the City's Open Data efforts. **Reinvent Albany thinks the following milestones from the 2018 Open Data Annual Report are particularly notable:**

1. **Eighty nine percent of datasets in the portal have data dictionaries.**
   Local Law 107 of 2015 requires all open datasets to have Data dictionaries that
   explain and define category headers in datasets, providing important context and
   definition to the information provided. We are glad to see the city has made such
   rapid progress complying with this important mandate.
2. **Eighty percent of datasets are geocoded.** This enables users to evaluate
   how city assets are allocated across the city, identify trends like crime and 311
   service requests, and use data to study issues on a very localized level.
3. **MODA is building a community around Open Data both internally and
   externally.** The most visible example of this is Open Data Week, which MODA
   has spearheaded with BetaNYC. Open Data Week is a series of Open Data related
   events which 1800 people attended last year. Open Data Week strengthens
   external partnerships and stakeholders of Open Data.
4. **The report highlights how data is used to better city services.** The city's
   use of Primary Land Use Tax Lot Output (PLUTO) data plus 311 Service Request
   information to identify high-risk illegal conversions and allocate Department of
   Building inspectors is an impressive illustration of the tangible benefits of Open
   Data. Case studies like these featured in the report build support for the utility of
   the Open Data Law.
5. **The new [Civic Engagement commitments](#) by city agencies will help to
   build a culture of Open Data within city agencies.** We are pleased to see
   46 agencies committed to advertising Open Data on their websites. We think the
   way agencies advertise voter registration through the CFB on their home pages
   serves as a model for advertising the Open Data portal.
6. **[There are now 2,154 datasets in the portal](#), including 629 datasets
   added in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018.** The city is steadily making more of its
   information available to the public.
7. **Agencies put 1,627 datasets into the portal that are not listed in their
   annual publication of planned releases (see Appendix A analysis by
   Reinvent Albany).** This shows a culture of providing data to the public
   through the portal is taking hold at city agencies.
8. **The portal was accessed by 1 million unique users viewing 6 million
   pages of data in FY2018 alone.** The impressive number of visitors to the
   Open Data portal illustrates the demand for city data.

While the report showcases successes, it also reveals challenges facing the Open data
Law. **Reinvent Albany believes the following improvements could be made
in implementing the Open Data Law:**

1. **More datasets need to be automated.** Only 38 datasets were automated this past fiscal year out of a total of 302 potential candidates. Automation is critical to the sustainability of Open Data because it ensures that new data is made available to the public automatically, regardless of staffing and scheduling issues. We urge DoITT to accelerate automation and publish a schedule to automate all eligible datasets.

2. **Agencies need to fulfill their promises to release datasets reported in annual plans to MODA.** Only 42 percent of datasets agencies promised to publish were released in 5 years. [The Open Data Plan Tracker](#) published by MODA for the first time with the 2018 report as a result of Local Law 251 of 2017 shows that between 2013 and 2018 agencies identified 1,259 datasets to be published in annual plans. Of these, 527 of those datasets were actually published according to the Tracker - yet by our count, some of these 527 are not available through the Open Data Portal.

3. **MODA needs to ensure the "Plan Tracker" and other updates provide an accurate accounting of what datasets are actually published.**
   a. MODA's Open Data Plan Tracker shows [certain agencies released more datasets identified in annual plans](#) than are [actually in the portal](#). As shown in the chart in Appendix A constructed by Reinvent Albany, The Department of Investigation (DOI), the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and the Mayor's Office all have far fewer datasets in the Open Data Portal than reported in their annual plans to MODA.
   b. It is not clear how MODA defines the Mayor's Office which is listed as its own Office in the Plan Tracker while some offices are separately listed (MOCS, OMB, MOS, OPS, Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity, Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, etc.).
   c. The MODA [Future Releases dataset](#) lists 524 datasets scheduled for publication but only 514 are scheduled in the Open Data Plan Tracker.

4. **The NYPD should be releasing more datasets to the portal.** The Civilian Complaint Review Board, a very tiny agency, has released 8 times the datasets of the NYPD, a very large one (120 datasets to 14 datasets) as shown in Appendix A.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I welcome any questions you may have.

Appendix A- Agency Datasets Released Ranked by Number Released

Below is a chart Reinvent Albany constructed from 2 different publicly available Open Data datasets (The Open Data Plan Tracker and the Published Dataset Asset Inventory). The chart shows for each agency, the number of datasets in the portal, the number of datasets released from their annual plans, and the number of datasets scheduled to be released according to their annual plans.

Agency	Datasets Released Total (including datasets not in annual plans report)	Datasets Released Listed in Annual Plans	Scheduled for Release in Annual Plans
Department of Education (DOE)	563	47	135
Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT)	157	7	1
Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)	120		
Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)	100	17	46
Department of City Planning (DCP)	95	30	2
Department of Finance (DOF)	91	14	13
Department of Transportation (DOT)	81	31	85
Other	75		
Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC)	53	7	

Department of Probation (DOP)	46	40	
Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)	43		6
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)	40	26	15
NYC School Construction Authority (SCA)	39	23	
Human Resource Administration (HRA)	36	5	13
Mayor's Office of Operations (OPS)	36		1
Department of Sanitation (DSNY)	28	6	
Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)	27	20	9
Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS)	27		3
Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)	26	22	10
New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)	24	6	
Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)	23	9	4
Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity	22	1	

Office of the Manhattan Borough President (MBPO)	19	22	
Small Business Services (SBS)	19	9	3
Office of Emergency Management (OEM)	19	4	
Mayor's Office of Management & Budget (OMB)	18	7	2
Department of Buildings (DOB)	18	3	2
Mayor's Office of Sustainability (MOS)	18		
Department of Correction (DOC)	17	9	2
Department of Homeless Services (DHS)	17	3	4
NYC Independent Budget Office (IBO)	15	15	1
Administration for Children's Services (ACS)	15	12	1
Police Department (NYPD)	14	3	4
Campaign Finance Board (CFB)	14		
Fire Department of New York (FDNY)	13	9	1
311	12		
Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)	10	9	
New York City Council	10	4	3

(NYCC)			
Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)	9	6	8
Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)	9	3	
Mayor's Office of Climate Policy and Programs	9	2	
Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC)	9		
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)	9		
Economic Development Corporation (EDC)	7		
Civil Service Commission (CSC)	6	3	
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence	6	2	
Department of Design and Construction (DDC)	6	1	
Law Department (LAW)	6		1
Business Integrity Commission (BIC)	5	1	7
Alliance for Downtown New York	5		
New York Public Library (NYPL)	5		
Office of Film, Theatre, and Broadcasting (FILM)	5		

Latin Media & Entertainment Commission (LMEC)	4		
Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer	4		
Department of Investigation (DOI)	3	9	
Office of the Comptroller (COMPTROLLER)	3	3	7
Conflict of Interest Board (COIB)	3	2	
Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS)	3	1	3
Board of Elections (BOENY)	3		
Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM)	3		
Department for the Aging (DFTA)	2	2	78
Office of Payroll Administration (OPA)	2	2	
Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA)	2		
Brooklyn Public Library (BPL)	2		
Commission on Women's Issues (CWI)	2		
Mayor's Office of Data Analytics (MODA)	2		

Mayor's Office of Media And Entertainment (MOME)	2		
New York City Tax Commission (TAXCOMM)	2		
NYC & Company (NYCGO)	2		
Police Pension Fund (NYCPPF)	2		
Queens Library (QBPL)	2		
Office of the Mayor (OTM)	1	40	
Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)	1	23	
Staten Island Borough President (BPSI)	1	3	
Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH)	1	2	1
NYC Recovery	1	1	
City University of New York (CUNY)	1		
HHS Accelerator	1		
Mayor's Office of Adult Education (ADULTED)	1		
NYC Media (MEDIA)	1		
NYC Service (NYCSERVICE)	1		
Procurement Policy Board (PPB)	0	1	
Brooklyn Borough President (BBP)	0		16

Commission to Combat Police Corruption (CCPC)	0		15
Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation (MOER)	0		2
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs	0		1
Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR)	0		4
NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR)	0		2
Public Design Commission (PDC)	0		2
Queens Borough President (QBP)	0		1

Total	**2,154**	**527**	**514**