

City Charter Amendment-DOITT (Chapter 48)-Public Hearing Statement

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May 2, 2019

Bio: I am resident of Manhattan, a digital researcher, archivist, teacher, and entrepreneur. I am an advisor on several information and data mentoring projects that provide introductions and resources for companies and individuals working with government entities. I am also a member of an international project of the Open Geospatial Consortium to develop a data model for underground infrastructure. Currently, I serve on the Board of Directors of the NYC Geospatial Information Systems and Mapping Organization (GISMO) where I coordinate activities for the Coalition of Geospatial Information Technology Organizations (or COGITO), on whose behalf I am speaking today.

COGITO is an informal alliance of non-governmental practitioners and researchers who are interested in the geospatial technology environment New York City. This group includes researchers and data centers at many of the City's public and private universities (CUNY: Hunter College, Lehman College, the geospatial center at Bronx Community College's CREST Institute, John Jay College, BMCC, and at the New School and Cornell Tech, and Columbia's Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) as well as spatial data centers at Columbia, Pratt Institute, CUNY Graduate School and NYU Tandon). It also includes professional associations and civic groups like the American Geographical Society, the NY State GIS Association, the Society of Women Geographers, Open Geospatial Consortium, Beta NYC, URISA and other, informal meetups and regional interest groups.

I came to speak today about the need for oversight of geographic tools and data. The 2012 Open Data Law allowed our City to create a robust community of civic data consumers, adding a great deal to NYC economic development, operations and citizen services. Applications for academic research, civic accountability and citizen services have exploded in the last several years, with new businesses and citizen-led initiatives created and supported by the NYC geodata ecosystem and City programs like the Big Apps Challenge.

While the data portal has done a good job making agency data sets available to the public, and efforts are moving toward more structured data formats, data standards are not rigorously enforced. Most of the data produced by the City is geocoded which requires management by a central governing entity can ensure that processes and data are standardized and interoperable data across all City departments, and ensure the protection of sensitive data and ensure that location based data in particular is not inadvertently harming citizens and their privacy. We are proposing that a Chief Geospatial Information Officer along with a GIS Steering Committee at DOITT would make the data more useful to business, City partners and the public and that

these processes and overall strategy would support our growing and vibrant civic data communities.

Some of you may be wondering why can't this role be covered by the City's Chief Data Officer? The Mayor's Office of Data Analytics was created in 2013 by Executive Order 306 with a limited mandate to analyze and share City data with the public. It is not equipped to address Citywide operational challenges that require coordinated efforts among City departments, service vendors and non-government partners, such as a massive emergency/9-11 type event. While it is certainly true that MODA could oversee data formats and delivery of public-facing geospatial data, a DOITT role, codified in the City Charter, would also cover sensitive geospatial data that is not publicly available, such as underground infrastructures and emergency and safety operations.

In light of the above and on behalf of COGITO, I support amendments to Chapter 48, DOITT of the City Charter as follows:

- The appointment of a Deputy Commissioner who serves as the City's Chief Geospatial Information Officer
- The establishment of a GIS Steering Committee comprised of Agency GIS leaders and other experts.
- A requirement that the City produce and keep up to date a GIS strategic plan.
- A requirement that the spatial data connecting most of the City's open data be standardized, interoperable and easy to use.
- The establishment of an underground infrastructure steering committee comprised of representatives from City infrastructure agencies and private utilities, to guide the improvement of utility data so it can be quickly accessed and used during routine operations and emergencies.