COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN

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COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN INTRODUCES OPEN GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

Bills Would Deploy Technology to Increase Efficiency, Enhance Transparency, Ensure Accountability, and Foster Innovation

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Councilman At-Large Bill Green today introduced three bills as part of his comprehensive "Open Government Philadelphia" plan to deploy technology to create more responsive and nimble government, delivering better services more efficiently for all Philadelphians.

"As the City proceeds with a long-overdue, $120 million investment in technology upgrades over the next five years, we must remain focused on pursuing and enabling innovation that increases city government's effectiveness, while reducing its size and cost," Green said. "Enacting the Open Government platform will move the city past business as usual and precipitate needed workflow and systems changes."

The components of the Open Government platform introduced today are as follows:

Electronic Option

The first bill in the package requires the City to ensure that an electronic option is available for citizens and City employees to conduct transactions, including license and permit applications, service requests, and payment of taxes, fines, and fees. Furthermore, the bill requires the assignment of a unique identifier for every citizen or business, which would be associated with all City-related interactions or transactions they conduct, thereby allowing easier processing of transactions, streamlined service delivery, and improved customer service.

"Without moving information from paper forms to online fields, we will be unable to leverage the power of technology to realize the goal of making Philadelphia city government the most open and transparent government in the United States," Green remarked.

Open Data

The second bill requires all City records and data to be accessible to the public through a single website. Furthermore, the records and data must be published in a machine-readable, open format that can be visualized, retrieved, downloaded, indexed, sorted, searched, and reused.   Green's open data bill is modeled upon comprehensive open data legislation passed this week by New York City Council, which is described at: http://techpresident.com/news/21837/new-york-city-enact-open-data-law-defines-open.

"It is incumbent upon us to make City data readily available to the public to enhance transparency, engage citizens, and spur innovation," Councilman Green noted.   "We have a growing, often untapped, community of innovators in Philadelphia who can bring fresh eyes and tech savvy to helping make government work better.   Open data is the linchpin to our unleashing and utilizing that talent pool."

IT Strategic Plan

The third bill in the package requires the development of an annual information technology strategic plan that evaluates the current state of the City's telecommunications and information technology infrastructure and details – as well as analyzes the costs and benefits of – the City's plans for the acquisition, management, and use of telecommunications and information technology over the next five fiscal years.

"Just as we need better and more information when making decisions about how to best deploy the limited operating budget resources to achieve maximum good, so too with technology spending," Green noted. "To hold ourselves accountable as a government, we need to set concrete performance goals related to technology, publish them, and report on our progress annually. The public deserves nothing less."

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Attachments: Copies of bills.