# **Open Data Communications: Frequently Asked Questions**

**DRAFT 1: 1/12/2015 LH**

**Open Data: High-Level, Core Questions**

**In simple terms, please describe your open data effort?**

The city of Durham and Durham County are working together on a “pilot project” to make a single public-facing website to share data with the public.

While there will be “canned” reports that show at-a-glance statistics about the region, there will be access to “raw data” in a digital format that is easily accessed and used: by anyone build and run reports for stronger insights into their government and community; and developers to get “raw” data to build new/innovative applications.

**What is different than other Open Data efforts, YTD?**

As you know, the open data effort is still relatively embryonic. In our view, many other efforts are being done as part of a public relations effort, or simply to be able to acknowledge participation in an open data effort.

Our long-term vision is to build an open data program that:

* is sociably sustainable to citizens, City/County, local, state and federal governments, employees and the private industry.
* focuses on empowering the stakeholders
* is not limited to geographic boundaries and is open regionally and beyond.

**Is there a benefit for the City and County to be in partnership?**

Yes, the Durham region is one of the nation’s fastest growing areas and is one of the known technology centers in the country. It’s important for us to keep pace, and take advantage of the local creativity and experience. Together, we are building a unified effort that has more data, better coordinated and is easier to use than having independent open data efforts.

Because “Durham” names both City and County, most people who live in the area don’t want to distinguish if they live in Durham city or Durham County. They want a consistent, high quality of life regardless of where they live, and that’s why we do a lot of joint initiatives. Annually, we formally evaluate and seek opportunities like Open Data where we can work together to raise the quality of life in our region.

**So, where is this effort, today--January 2015?**

We just formally kicked it off in Q4 of 2014

We are now in the proof of concept phase and are now bringing on Jason Hare, a very experienced open data consultant to help us build our open data effort.

Milestones to accomplish by the end of summer include:

* Obtain our open data technology platform
* Set up and implement our platform
* Create our organizational structure, data stewards, define policies, processes and procedures
* Deploy initial datasets to public
* Evaluate the pilot

**What audiences are critical for your Open Data effort to be successful?**

* Internal: Our data is provided by the individual departments
* External: Other open data organizations like Code for America, potential important community groups and leaders such as those in faith-based organizations; community and political leadership, formal and social media; businesses who may have an interest in building associated applications

**Technology Questions**

**If you have not decided on a platform, what are you seeking?**

Our platform must be able to easily empower people who want to utilize our data. For us, we see empowerment as a driver for long-term sustainability.

Tool/portal attributes (Must satisfied empower the community goal):

* Easy to use/learn
* Device agnostic
* Able to work with other open data platforms
* Searchable (like Google’s page)