



Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Finance
From: Mayor Miro Weinberger
Date: September 27, 2013
Re: Socrata and City Data Opportunity

Restoring transparency, accountability, and metrics-based management in the City's governance and communicating City goals and progress clearly to our community continue to be some of my top priorities for our City. Socrata, a cloud-based software company facilitating the "open data" shift for city and state governments through its Web-based platform the "Open Data Portal," offers a service that would allow the City to take another important step toward these goals.

Under the current proposal, Socrata would charge the City \$1,000 per month to use the platform for up to 20 different data sets. If the City acts prior to September 30, 2013, this cost would be subsidized by a grant of \$4,000 from Microsoft, putting the total FY14 cost to the City for a 9-month trial at \$5,000. Somerville, MA, Wellington, FL, and Weatherford, TX provide examples of how cities use Socrata's "Open Data Portal" to improve citizen access to city data about everything from budget expenditures and roof inspections, to 311 call center operations and mosquito test center locations.* Tailored for our City, the platform could supply information about the City's financial data, permitting status reports, a combination of City data and mapping technology for the bikers in our community, and many other topics.

Beyond the goals outlined above, the Socrata platform could allow the City to:

- Over time, reduce the cost and effort of responding to public information requests;
- Document and communicate successes like monthly financial reports of the Clerk / Treasurer's Office that help restore public confidence in City Hall as we work to stabilize the City's finances;
- Gather City data in one place to allow the Administration an opportunity to better measure the work we do and hold ourselves accountable;
- Eventually build a CitiStat capability off the Socrata platform; and
- Empower app designers and others outside City government to access local data.

I am considering using \$5,000 of the \$17,000 Special Projects line in the Regional Programs Budget to explore this opportunity, and I welcome discussion on the Socrata opportunity.

Thank you.

* Please see the following links for examples of city-based Socrata platforms: <https://data.somervillema.gov/>, <https://data.wellingtonfl.gov/>, and <https://data.weatherfordtx.gov/>.