Memorandum

CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 15, 2021

TO Honorable Mayor and City Council

SUBJECT **Removal of Victim Data from the Dallas Open Data Portal**

On August 18, 2021, the Office of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence (DBI) briefed the City Council on its efforts to rebuild the Open Data Portal. We publish relevant City data and information about data on the portal – for transparency and accessibility as well as to promote a data-centric operating model throughout the organization. In the rebuilding process, DBI raised concerns about published crime victim data. Subsequent conversations with law enforcement partners and research of other open data portals across the country validated the staff's concerns.

While crime data is still available on the Open Data Portal, staff has removed victim data components with personal identifying information of crime victims out of an abundance of caution. To be clear, there is no breach or data loss. The victim data still exists, but to protect crime victims, the data is no longer available to the public on the Open Data Portal for the following reasons:

- The risk of revictimization: By publishing personally identifiable information, perpetrators of crimes could determine that victims have reported the crime and risk opening victims up to reprisals or revictimization.
- The chilling effect on cooperation with law enforcement authorities: Should victims become aware that their personally identifiable information has become part of publicly accessible data, victims may choose not to report crimes committed against them. By not reporting crimes, the publication of this data risks preventing law enforcement from investigating crimes, discourages future crime reporting, and could prevent victims from receiving justice.
- Privacy-related best practices: The National Institute of Standards and Technology Privacy Control Framework category on disassociated data processing states that published data should be "processed to limit the identification of individuals and inferences about those individuals' activities" (e.g., data that could identify crime victims).

DBI staff will brief the Public Safety Committee on these issues so that the committee can make a policy decision about how the City approaches publishing sensitive data. Should you have any immediate questions or concerns please reach out to Dr. Brita Andercheck, Director of the Office of Data Analytics and Business Intelligence, at Brita.Andercheck@DallasCityHall.com.

M. Elizabeth Reich
Chief Financial Officer

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