



News from: City of Oakland

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City of Oakland Expands Public Access and Sheds Light on Legislative Proceedings with Granicus

Technology upgrades enable the City to prioritize open data, legislative efficiency and civic involvement

Oakland, CA — The City of Oakland recently took government transparency to the next level by becoming one of the first cities to prioritize full, open access to legislative data via the new version of software provider Granicus' Open API. The "open application programming interface" will allow developers to build programs that can communicate, integrate and use the information served on the Granicus platform for broader public dissemination. As a government leader with a strong dedication to transparency and efficiency, the City also upgraded its existing agenda management and civic involvement technologies to facilitate a deeper level of public access and input.

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"Community engagement is the backbone of our democracy," said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. "It's essential that government embrace new technologies to provide residents and businesses with access and information that can help increase responsiveness, convenience, and connections that will improve our communities. I want to thank our City Clerk LaTonda Simmons for working to develop Oakland's partnership with Granicus as an important step toward making sure our City systems keep pace with technology."

This technology upgrade allows City government and City Council meetings to be as accessible as possible for residents. City Clerk LaTonda Simmons, who managed the project and worked with Granicus to seamlessly migrate 14 years of legislative history in a record-setting 24 days, said, "This upgrade advances Oakland's commitment to transparency in a form that is particularly meaningful to both our citizens and the City Council through **eComment**. This feature increases the public's comment ability beyond the usual two-minute time limit for speakers at meetings and the Council's ability to deliberate more effectively and make fully informed decisions."

To achieve the City's mission of taking legislative transparency and civic involvement to the next level, a number of significant upgrades were made to Oakland's agenda management solution, which is powered by Granicus, the industry's leading provider of government transparency, legislative efficiency and collaboration solutions. Prior to the upgrade, the City was using Granicus' legislative management software to significantly reduce the amount of staff time needed to introduce, manage and track legislation.

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News from:
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Light on Legislative
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Page Two

The upgraded solution now boasts several new features to maximize transparency of legislative information on the City’s website: API access, a flexible and integrated approval tracking of matters that move through Oakland’s legislative process, a recent items dashboard, custom labeling and “configurable motion text” that allows the Clerk’s office to state the actions of Council in plain language.

In addition to the eComment tool, Oakland has also implemented a public engagement portal to allow residents to speak up. **SpeakUp Oakland!** (speakupoakland.org) facilitates various means of public engagement on City projects, forums, discussions and also allows the public to submit their ideas on improving Oakland.

To submit feedback on featured projects, forums, discussions or meeting agendas, the public can go to speakupoakland.org to register or log in using a Facebook account. Clicking the links at the top of the page allows users to comment on posted items. To comment on agenda items prior to a City Council meeting, click on the Meetings link at the top of the page, click on View Agenda for the meeting where your topic of interest has been scheduled and scroll to the agenda item and click comment. Users may also indicate whether they support, oppose or are neutral on a specific item.

“It is exciting to partner with truly innovative government agencies like Oakland, which is leading the way to not only improve internal processes through the use of technology, but as an outflow of that, make legislative data more available,” said Michael Ashford, Granicus Vice President of Marketing. “We wholeheartedly support Oakland’s decision to require that vendors provide the ability for API access and are excited to be part of the effort.”

About Granicus

Granicus provides the industry’s leading cloud-based solutions for government efficiency and transparency, with software that helps more than 1,100 organizations and 63,000 government staff members streamline their workflows and establish more meaningful connections with citizens — online, over social networks, and mobile devices. Granicus’ solutions include live webcasting of public meetings and video archival, complete agenda and legislative management software and tools for automating boards and commissions management processes, as well as in-meeting mobile solutions for elected officials and online feedback platforms for citizens. Visit www.granicus.com for more information.

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