



# Local Governments Get “On Board” with Open Gov

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October 4, 2014

Presentation by Hayley Roberts and Emily Thompson

Michigan Suburbs Alliance





M I C H I G A N

**Suburbs Alliance**





**ON**

**BOARD**

## Presentation Outline

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- Background
- Prototyping
- Demo
- What's Next
- Conclusion
- Q & A



## One NYC, Many Ferndales

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- 35,879 cities, villages and townships
- 96% have less than 25,000 people
- 49% have less than 1,000



## Ensuring small governments embrace new tools

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- Build tools in partnership with local governments
- Make sure they're easy to use and...
- Accessible





# MILLENNIAL MAYORS CONGRESS

ESTABLISHED 2009

[www.millennialmayors.org](http://www.millennialmayors.org)

ON BOARD

## (Under)Representation

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- 18-35 year olds make up 23% of the population
- 29% of registered voters
- 6% of local board members
- Less than 3% of city council members





## Why are young people underrepresented?

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- Are they unqualified?
- Are they uninterested?
- Are they unaware?





**MILLENNIAL  
MAYORS  
CONGRESS**  
ESTABLISHED 2008

## MILLENNIAL REPRESENTATION REPORT FOR THE CITY OF EASTPOINTE

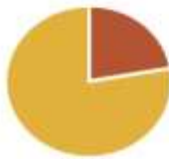
The Millennial Mayors Congress selected Millennial Representation as its signature issue for 2013. The Congress believes young people are excited about opportunities for development and growth in metro Detroit, but are underrepresented and therefore limited in their ability to affect change. With this in mind, we gathered population and voter registration data for our 23 member cities. We then looked at Millennial representation on city councils and on boards, committees and commissions, and at how cities share information and recruit applicants.

### Our research shows...

#### Millennials are underrepresented...

IN EASTPOINTE

**POPULATION**  
Millennials account for 22% of the population



POPULATION  
32,142  
MILLENNIALS  
7,281

**REGISTERED VOTERS**  
Millennials account for 27% of registered voters



**BOARD MEMBERS**  
Data unavailable



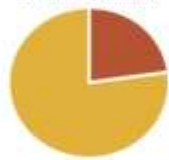
BOARD SEATS  
Unknown  
MILLENNIALS  
Unknown



**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Millennials hold 0 city council seats (0% of seats)

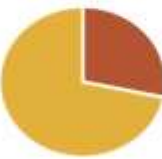
IN THE REGION

**POPULATION**  
Millennials account for 23% of the population



POPULATION  
1,089,561  
MILLENNIALS  
248,533

**REGISTERED VOTERS**  
Millennials account for 29% of registered voters



**BOARD MEMBERS**  
Millennials hold 6% of board/commission seats



BOARD SEATS  
2121  
MILLENNIALS  
128



**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Millennials hold a total of 5 city council seats (1% of seats)

#### ...and we can do more to engage them!

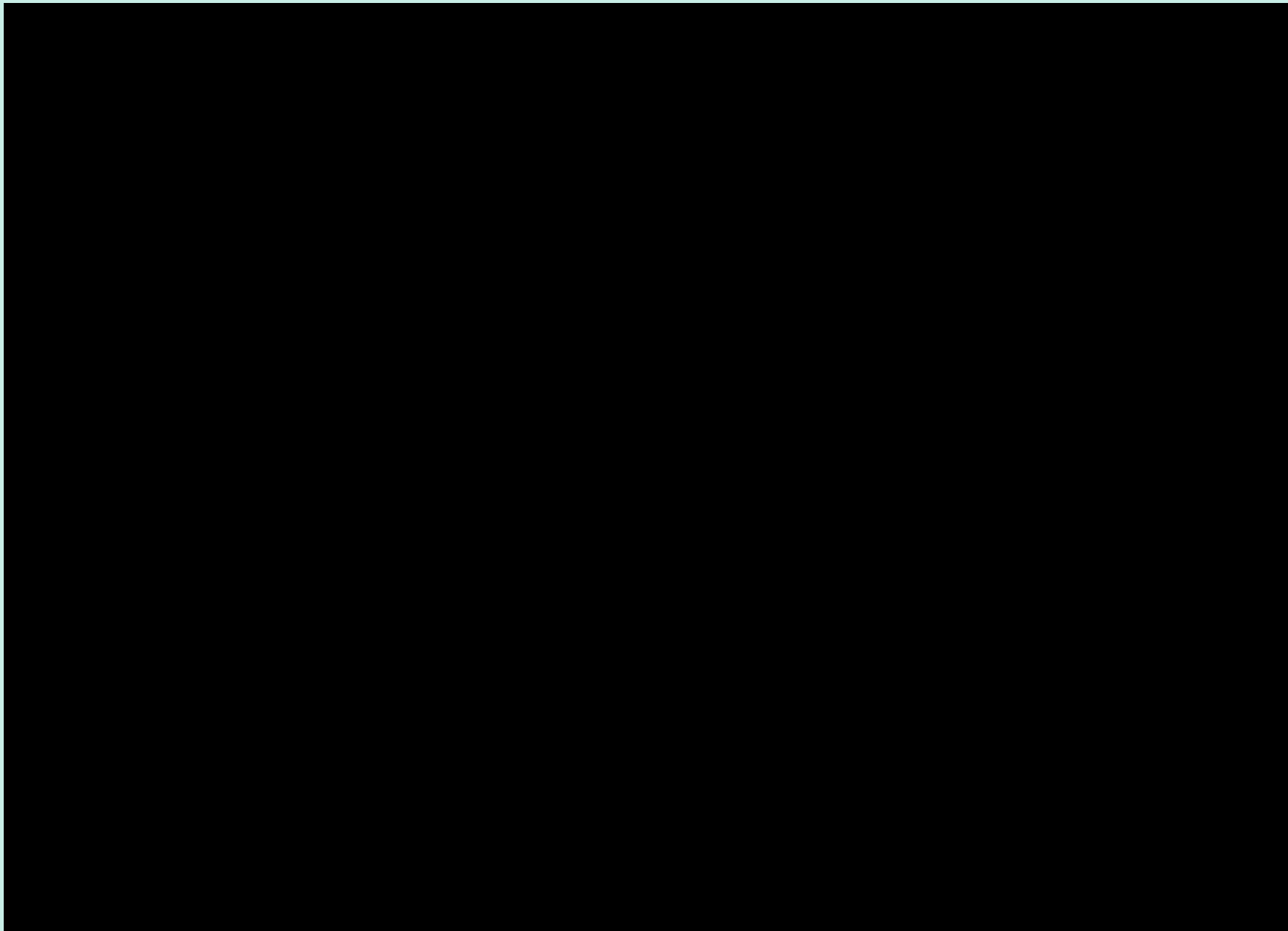
## MILLENNIAL REPRESENTATION REPORT FOR THE CITY OF EASTPOINTE

### Millennial Engagement Best Practices

Our research shows young people (age 18-35) are underrepresented and that our cities can do more to engage them. For example, only 3 of our 23 member cities use social media like Facebook to announce vacant board, committee and commission seats and recruit applicants. The use of social media is one of many best practices in our **MILLENNIAL ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES**.

	23 member cities do this at least sometimes... but not Eastpointe	
A. LIST ALL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS ON YOUR WEBSITE	<input type="radio"/>	20 +
B. PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF EACH BOARD AND COMMISSION ON YOUR WEBSITE AND INCLUDE:	<input type="radio"/>	17
THE BOARD'S PURPOSE	<input type="radio"/>	15
WHEN AND WHERE IT MEETS	<input type="radio"/>	16
HOW MANY MEMBERS IT HAS AND HOW LONG THEY SERVE	<input type="radio"/>	10
HOW APPOINTMENTS ARE MADE	<input type="radio"/>	9
WHO IS QUALIFIED TO SERVE	<input type="radio"/>	1
WHO TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION	<input type="radio"/>	4
C. PROVIDE MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDAS ON YOUR WEBSITE	<input type="radio"/>	11
D. LIST BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS ON YOUR WEBSITE	<input type="radio"/>	13
E. ADVERTISE VACANT BOARD AND COMMISSION POSITIONS ON YOUR WEBSITE	<input type="radio"/>	5
F. PROVIDE A COPY OF YOUR APPLICATION ON YOUR WEBSITE AND INCLUDE:	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	18
EACH BOARD'S PURPOSE	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	3
HOW APPOINTMENTS ARE MADE	<input type="radio"/>	3
WHO IS QUALIFIED TO SERVE	<input type="radio"/>	1
WHO TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	11
G. ALLOW APPLICANTS TO SUBMIT THE APPLICATION ELECTRONICALLY	<input type="radio"/>	6
H. CREATE A SET TIMEFRAME FOR APPOINTMENTS	<input type="radio"/>	1
I. ADVERTISE VACANT BOARD AND COMMISSION POSITIONS ON YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE	<input type="radio"/>	3
J. PROVIDE A LIST OF ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ON YOUR WEBSITE	<input type="radio"/>	6
K. PROVIDE A HANDBOOK OR ORIENTATION FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS	<input type="radio"/>	1
L. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO GET INVOLVED	<input type="radio"/>	6

Yes      Sometimes      No





## Advisory Board

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- 2 city staffers
- A Millennial
- A Code for America alumnus
- A UM professor



## Next Steps

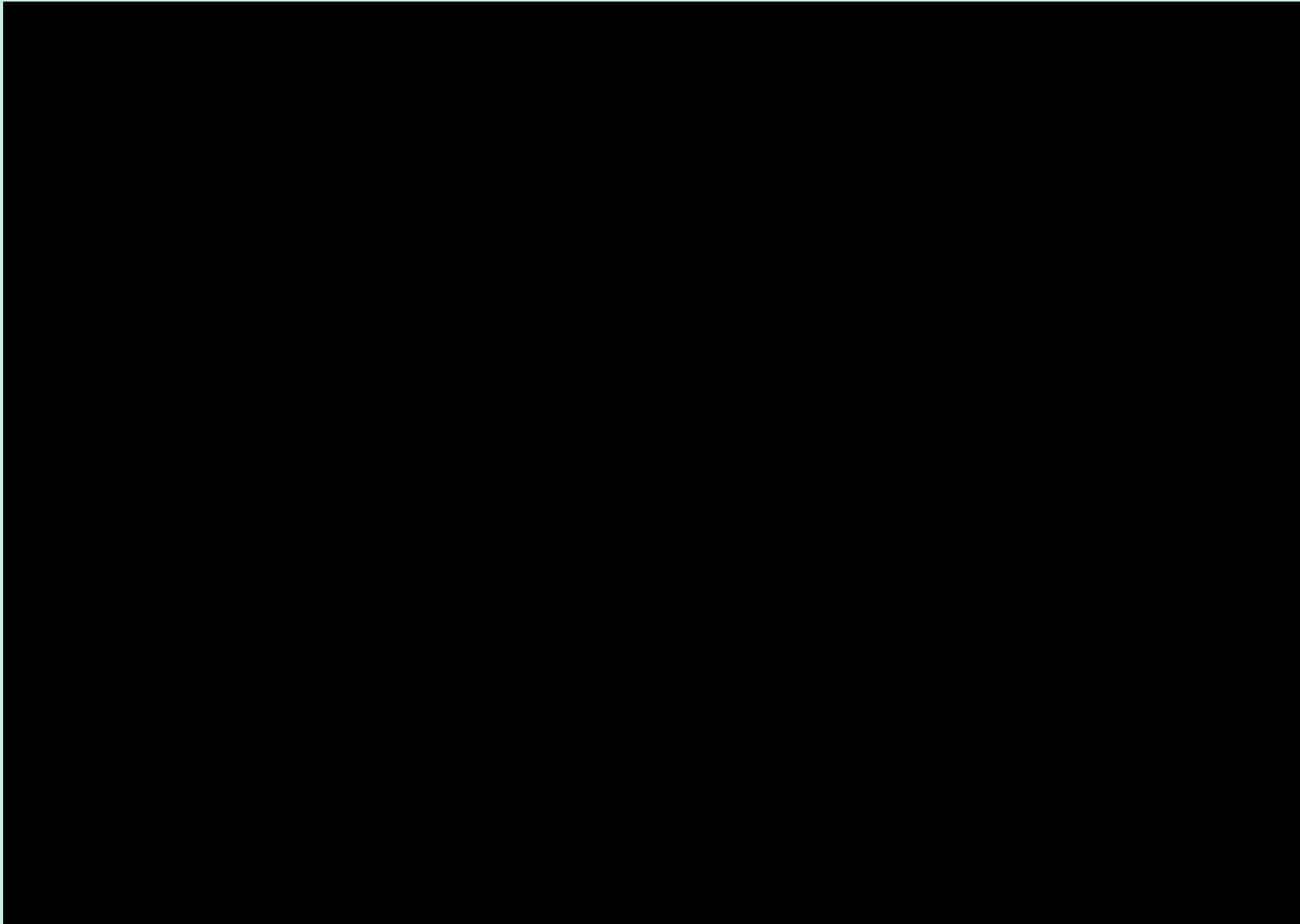
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- Create and circulate an RFP
- Choose a studio
- Choose communities
- Design and build On Board
- Incorporate feedback





**ON BOARD**





## Michigan Suburbs Alliance Helps Cities Get "On Board"

Emily Thompson, Michigan Suburbs Alliance

New technologies are critical to advancing good and open government and encouraging resident participation, but many local governments have yet to take advantage of even the most basic tools. Appointed boards and commissions provide a good example. Local governments rely on appointed boards and commissions for assistance in achieving public goals; unfortunately many residents are unaware of these bodies or don't understand how to engage with them. As a result, local governments receive a limited number of applications and certain groups are underrepresented. Young people, for example, account for 29% of registered voters in metro Detroit, but only 6% of board and commission members.

The Michigan Suburbs Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to promote

metropolitan solutions, hopes to change this with On Board ([OnBoardMI.org](http://OnBoardMI.org)). For local officials, OnBoardMI.org is a secure database they can use to more easily manage information about boards and commissions. For residents, it's a website they can use to find information about these bodies and get involved.

The idea for On Board was developed in partnership with representatives from 23 metro Detroit communities that participate in the Suburbs Alliance's Millennial Mayors Congress. The Congress wanted to see local governments do more to engage young people, so they created a set of best practices to help cities provide more comprehensive information on their own websites. On Board was envisioned as both a tool to support the implementation of these best practices and as a one-stop-shop for information.

The Suburbs Alliance received a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to build a prototype version of On Board, in order to gauge the feasibility of and interest in the project. To ensure the site meets the needs of local governments, it sought government partners to help guide its development. On Board launched in February and three jurisdictions have begun to use it to publicize board descriptions, memberships, and term expirations: Washtenaw County and the Cities of Ferndale and Ypsilanti.

The Suburbs Alliance is currently collecting feedback from staff and residents in these communities. In the coming months, it hopes to expand On Board's functionality and open the site to more communities. In creating more than just a database, and creating something accessible and appealing, the Suburbs Alliance hopes to help residents meaningfully participate in shaping their own communities.

The author can be reached at [emily@suburbsalliance.org](mailto:emily@suburbsalliance.org).



The On Board website provides visitors with an easy way to learn about how to get involved in their community. It is currently being piloted for three jurisdictions in Metropolitan Detroit.



## ONBoardMI.org: Tracking Boards and Commissions

Local governments rely on appointed boards and commissions for advice, ideas, and assistance in achieving public goals. Unfortunately, many residents are unaware of these bodies or don't understand how to engage with them. The Michigan Suburbs Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to promote metropolitan solutions, hopes to change this with OnBoardMI.org.

For local officials, OnBoardMI.org is a secure database that staff can use to more easily manage information about appointed boards and commissions. For residents, it's a website they can use to find information about these bodies and get involved. The Suburbs Alliance received a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to build a prototype version of OnBoardMI.org, in order to gauge the feasibility of and interest in the project. To ensure the site meets the needs of local governments, Ferndale, Ypsilanti, and Washtenaw County have signed on to participate and help guide its development.

The idea for OnBoardMI.org was developed by representatives from 23 metro Detroit communities that participate in the Suburbs Alliance's Millennial Mayors Congress. The Congress wanted to see local governments do more to engage young people, so they created a set of best practices designed to help communities provide more comprehensive information on their own websites. OnBoardMI.org was envisioned as both a tool to

support the implementation of these best practices as well as a one-stop-shop for information.

OnBoardMI.org launched in February, and Ferndale, Ypsilanti, and Washtenaw County are already taking advantage of it, centralizing information like board descriptions, memberships, meeting times, and term expirations. By collecting feedback from staff and residents in these communities, the Suburbs Alliance hopes to expand OnBoardMI.org's functionality and open the site to communities across the region and state.

"The city of Ferndale is very excited to be selected to participate in the OnBoardMI.org pilot program. We have found the program very intuitive and easy to use. We hope the project will be expanded as this is a great tool to increase transparency and promote more participation in our city boards and commissions," said Ferndale Deputy City Clerk Marie McGrath.

Interested in learning more about or participating in OnBoardMI.org? Contact Program Manager Emily Thompson at the Michigan Suburbs Alliance at 313-444-4600 or [emily@suburbsalliance.org](mailto:emily@suburbsalliance.org).

### Michigan Suburbs Alliance

In 2002, representatives from 14 metro Detroit suburbs unanimously agreed to form the Michigan Suburbs Alliance. Together, they sought to harness the power of southeast Michigan's 1.9 million inhabitants to demand an end to the systematic disinvestment in older cities. These mayors and city managers founded the Michigan Suburbs Alliance as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit coalition of southeast Michigan's mature suburbs. At the Suburbs Alliance, we bring cities together to solve the region's most pressing challenges, and our municipal members play a key role in setting our priorities and direction. When your community becomes a member of the Suburbs Alliance, you're also becoming a leader in the region.

[www.michigansuburbsalliance.org](http://www.michigansuburbsalliance.org)

## What's Next

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- Expand On Board's functionality
- Open the site to more communities
- Engage residents
- Develop a business plan



## Conclusion

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“Cities are really eager and excited to use technology... And they’ve been really great about opening up data recently. It’s the next step that’s really important. That’s what this project does.”

– Matt Hampel, Local Data



## Conclusion

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- 160 cities
- 22,400 board members
- 35,879 cities
- 5,023,064 board members





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