OPEN DATA AND GOVERNMENT:
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES FROM CANADA AND THE US

MELISSA BAUMAN | WESTERN MPA CONFERENCE 2015

OUTLINE

- What is open government?
- Scope/Overview of Research Methodology
- Why is this important to local government?
- Findings (Abbreviated)
- Key Take-Aways
- Next steps/ future research projects

WHAT IS OPEN GOVERNMENT?

Engagement

- Combination of online and traditional engagement tools, participation of diverse audiences

Access

- Free, greater access to information

Big Data

- Complex data sets, often used for predictive analysis

Open Data

- Proactive release of government records, routine disclosure

SCOPE AND OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary focus: open data program implementation success factors

Case study approach

Literature Review: evolution of civic participation, defining open government/data, municipal structural considerations in Canada/US, best practice models

Primary Research: reports, news articles, review of programs/data catalogs, interviews (politicians and administrators)

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

- Popular topic of discussion at all levels of government

- Scope of project is intended to broaden the conversation regarding open data and open government policy in Ontario

- Examining creative frameworks for enhancing governance over government.

FINDINGS

Role of upper levels of government:

- legislative guidance, power and influence

Role of local government actors:

- organizational culture, staff-politician dynamics (formal and informal power)

Third party actors:

- financial support from advocacy groups in the US, connections to universities/ tech expertise needed

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Foster strong political partnerships
- Find those internal staff to champion the program
- Build and sustain external partnerships
- Innovation of open data taking place in Ontario, however, challenges exist

NEXT STEPS

Only scratching the surface – programs will develop and grow, technology will continue to evolve

Opportunities for continued research