How Does Open Data Create Social Impact?

Emily Shaw, National Policy Manager

SUNLIGHT FOUNDATION

Problems are everywhere – and solutions are too

- The internet empowers deterritorialized, loosely-coupled human cooperation
- Ideas can come from anywhere – the more potential cooperating partners, the better
- Open data – data available to everyone, for free - provides the building blocks for solving vexing problems through loosely-coupled cooperation

Data is the 21ˢᵗ Century's Navigable Waters

Treating data as a **public good** means asking: What happens if we provide everyone free access to data?

For Comparison: Public Trust Doctrine

- Principle: water and land up to the tideline are public and must be publicly maintained
- Challenges: public expense, value of privatizing resource
- Public benefits: navigation, recreation, research, wildlife protection, economic development

New Public Good, New Things to Figure Out:

How do we make the best use of this resource?
How do we ensure it has the largest possible positive impact?

Communicate, communicate, communicate.

1. Communicate about successes.

- Sunlight Foundation's "Impacts of Open Data" explores some of the kinds of problem-solving cooperation enabled by open data

SUNLIGHT FOUNDATION

1818 N Street N.W. • Suite 300 • Washington, D.C. 20036 | 202.742.1520 | F: 202.742.1524 | SunlightFoundation.com

THE IMPACTS OF OPEN DATA

At the Sunlight Foundation, we believe access to government information and decision-making processes is a fundamental democratic principle. Open data is one important way of achieving that access. Here, we explore some of those benefits and examples of how opening up information is making a difference in communities across the country.

To learn more about Sunlight's local policy work, explore our hub here: sunlightfoundation.com/policy/local

Create transparency   Empower accountability

Creating Transparency

NYC Checkbook 2.0
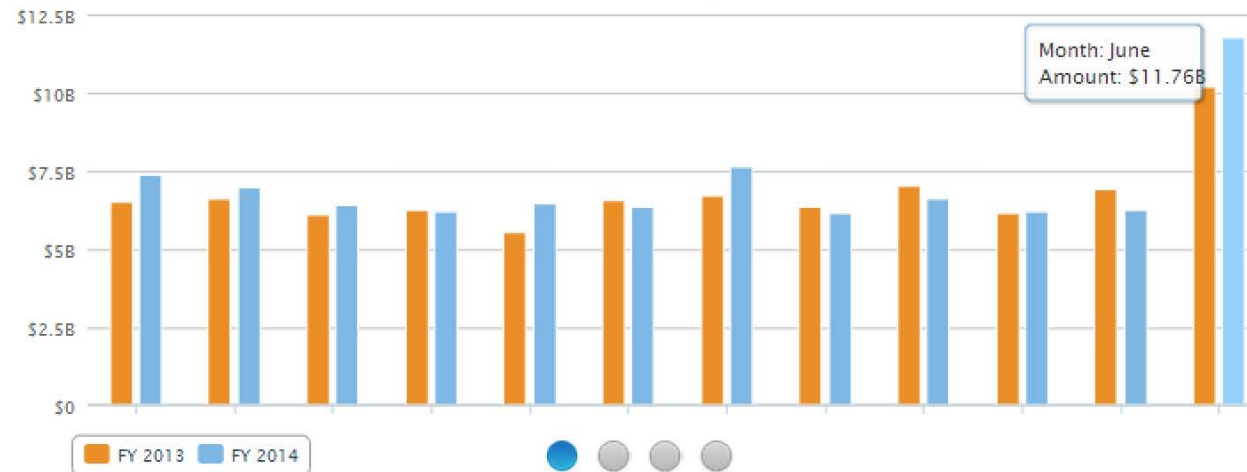
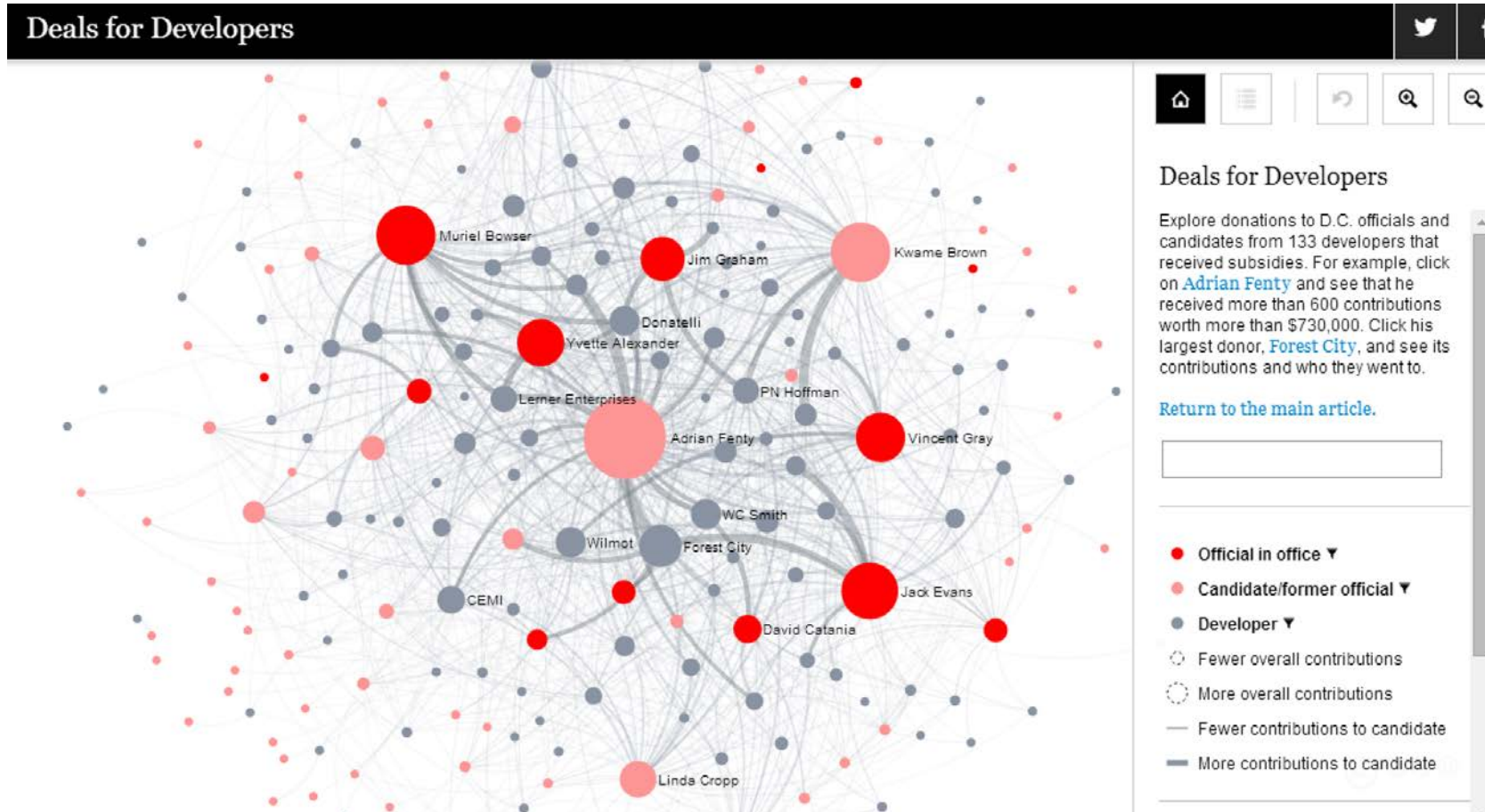# Empowering Accountability

WAMU Deals for Developers story

Improving Governmental Efficiency

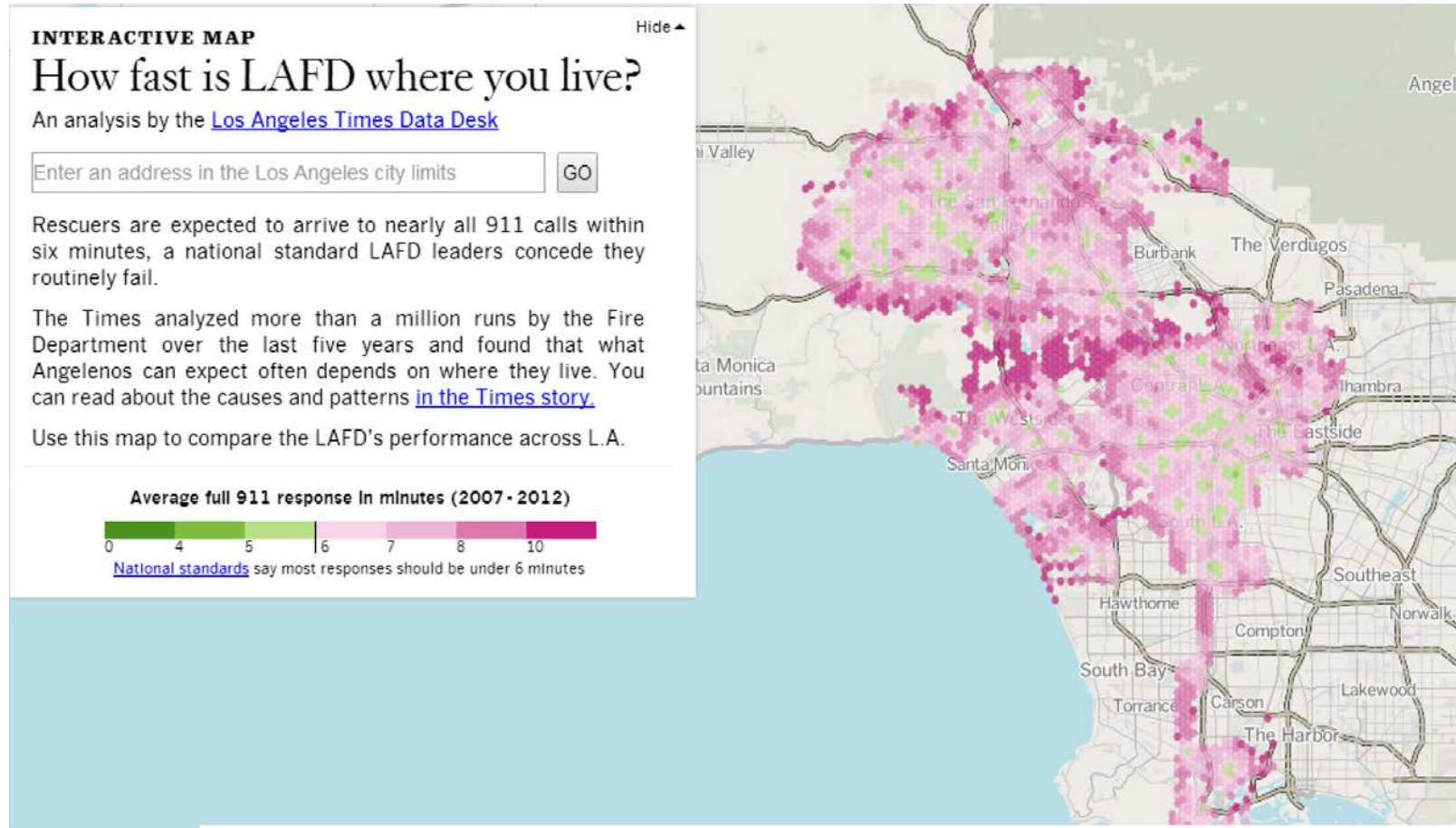## Using Data To Shine a Light on the Impact of City Services

Improving Governmental Effectiveness

Los Angeles Times: "How Fast is LAFD Where You Live?"

Increase Public Participation

South Bend, Indiana's CityVoice

2. Communicate About Shared Goals

- Health Care example: Ubiquity of "the Triple Aim" among health care researchers and advocates facilitates self-organizing cooperation.

- When a group of disconnected individuals all agree on a common definition of problems and set of goals to achieve, collective progress doesn't require traditional organization.

3. Communicate about the data you want.

- Asking for specific datasets from governments lets them know what data is worth extra effort to release.

- Community organizations are increasingly working with governments to collect and cooperatively release data.

Vital Signs 12, new website from Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance

The release of the 12th edition of Vital Signs adds another 8,000 data points -- 150 indicators for each of Baltimore city's 55 community statistical areas -- to the compendium of neighborhood information available on the updated BNIA website.

By Andrew Zaleski / STAFF

4. Communicate about data problems.

- Data quality concerns
- Cost of transition to open data
- Protecting individual privacy
- Restrictive public-private contracts
- Dealing with licensing and proprietary information

5. Communicate With Someone New!

- We are in the early days of a new concept in governance, and so Open Data needs you to talk about it!

- Does someone you know have a problem that could be solved with more data?

- Tell them to:
  - Ask for it by name!
  - Collect and share it freely!
  - Get in touch with open data advocates to find partners!