BetaNYC public comment on reporting requirements and advisory board meeting requirements within the City.

Drawing from four years' experience working with community boards, the Manhattan Borough President's Office, the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics, and the public, through our information classes, BetaNYC shares the following perspectives on public reporting requirements and the production of open data:

- Reports are the beginning of conversations. They help catalyze interest and present complex information in digestible, useful ways.

- For everyday purposes, reports are vital; they enable citizens to remain informed about our city's challenges and progress.

- However, all reports tell stories and have inherent biases; people need to be able to fact-check reports and tell their own stories, drill into different variables, and customize their geographical boundaries. Reports on borough lines, for instance, may look very different at the NTA or CD level. Reports become outdated very quickly, as well.

- Therefore, the data behind reports on municipal information must be made available to the public in compliance with the City's Open Data Law: it should be published, in a machine-readable format on the City's open data portal, with a frequency consistent with the data's collection.

- These datasets should be optimally processed before release to increase their usability. Consistent geocoding conventions should be established and adhered to to enable linking data across agencies and even within them.

- The recommendation to post data in reports does not just serve a niche group of policy analysts but serves the public at large. As more and more people learn to use raw data, a necessary skill for 21st century literacy, the data in reports becomes relevant to a quickly widening audience.

In conclusion, the data that goes into reports should be posted online to enable people to validate or challenge summary findings. There should be ongoing conversations with the general public about how to improve the reports. As reports become conversations around their data, this in turn provides an avenue for data improvement as well. NYC has a strong ecosystem to support this work, from data processing to release, updating, and use: MODA can help agencies figure out the most relevant data to work with; COPIC (Commission on Public Information and Communication) can be a source of support for how the data should be released; BetaNYC supports use of the data through our public information classes.