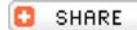


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Meet our 2019 Smart Cities Readiness Challenge finalists

Thu, 2019-03-14 20:22 -- Kevin Ebi



Our 2019 North American Smart Cities Readiness Challenge was our biggest yet. More than 100 cities throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico participated and three dozen delivered very strong applications detailing numerous smart cities projects they planned for their communities. The process of judging was very difficult, but we've narrowed the entries to 10 finalists, which are listed below.

This year we saw much more regional collaboration and three of the finalists are true regional efforts — one even spans the U.S./Mexico border. There's also a lot to be inspired by. For instance, a couple of the finalists are also using smart cities strategies to give their communities a second life.

We will narrow these finalists to five winners, who will receive a year-long Readiness Program to help turn their smart cities visions into at-scale projects. Winners will be announced at Smart Cities Week San Diego. Register to attend to hear from and be inspired by them. — Kevin Ebi

Baltimore has truly embraced a collaborative spirit to advance its vision by establishing a smart cities committee that includes a wide range of city staff but also has broad participation from the community and the tech ecosystem. Its data-driven, collaborative efforts have already yielded results to improve the quality of life for city residents and now it plans to continue that approach to better protect residents from flooding, address the opioid crisis and eliminate the digital divide.

Dallas has had a smart cities program in place since 2014 and has a strong plan, structure and foundational technologies in place. It's looking to create long-lasting impact with citizen-focused

services, commitment to sustainability, and cross-cutting programs such as integrating transportation decision-making with housing, economic development, equity and the environment.

Edmonton has already delivered substantial value for its residents through the design of programs like You Can Benefit, which helps citizens find government services, and multi-stakeholder projects like their Open Data Initiative. Their world-class team is helping Canada's fifth-largest city scale up their existing Smart City ecosystem, joining with neighboring jurisdictions, universities and community groups to deliver a bigger regional impact by leveraging technology and innovation.

Jersey City, NJ, is a high-diversity, high-growth city that's motivated to integrate smart technology into every facet of the community to improve the quality of life for all residents and increase economic development. The city has identified 15 projects, including one to better collect and use data to create targeted health interventions to streamline resources while meeting neighborhood-specific health needs.

Montgomery, AL, is advancing its smart cities vision through strategic partnerships, building relationships with the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Alabama Power Company and others. It's using A.I. technology to proactively assess road conditions, replacing a time-consuming, labor-intensive process, and partnering with schools, community centers and others to extend Wi-Fi access to all students.

Palm Coast, FL, is a comeback kid kind of city. In the mid-2000s, it was one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. when a recession put a heavy halt to the development of its promising downtown. Ten years later, its new approach and vision, driven by economic opportunities and smart cities principles, has resulted in a new Innovation District that's creating jobs and improving the quality of life for residents.

Racine, WI, is a post-industrial city poised for an economic comeback. In the midst of substantial redevelopment initiatives, it plans to turn its community into a smart cities laboratory that will serve as a showcase for other cities in similar situations. Among its numerous partners is Foxconn Technology Group, a company that plans to invest billions in the region, including an Innovation Center and related facilities in the City's downtown.

Cleantech San Diego is convening multiple cities, the port, airport, and regional planning experts from across San Diego County to approach smart cities efforts on a regional scale. Through sharing data and best practices and collaborative planning, entities will work together to develop a regional smart cities action plan that, among other things, will coordinate and deploy smart traffic signals and support the implementation of climate action plans.

The **North Florida Smart Region Coalition** is working from an established regional smart transportation plan that includes 33 project types for deployment across four counties. The coalition, which includes the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization, the cities of Jacksonville and St. Augustine, Jacksonville Transportation Authority and more than 100 public and private partners, is collaborating to advance new energy, safety, telecommunications, and health and human services initiatives.

U.S./Mexico Smart Towns Consortium brings together cities throughout Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and the Mexican state of Chihuahua with research institutions including Western New Mexico University and Arizona State University. Consortium members are working together to find ways of using smart technologies to benefit rural communities, especially in the areas of transportation and workforce and economic development.

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