WHITESPACE
building technology advisors

Smart Cities

6 Winning Strategies for Building a Connected City Primed for the Future

imagine

You are envisioning a new master development – one that creates an exceptional experience for those who live, work and play there. Surely, it will beckon: "Join us...this is the place to be!"

Blue skies, gleaming buildings, smiles.

Utopia.

rewind

It is not just the physical environment that calls today's consumer and visionary partners. It is the experience they have while there.

In essence...

- Is it easy to interact within the environment?
- Are they engaged?
- Do they feel safe?

Enter the Smart City.

Now, for developers seeking to build this kind of environment (you, for instance), there is a slew of information and opinions about what makes a smart city smart. Many will point to the Internet of Things – IoT, slick applications that makes things happen with the touch of a button, the wave of a phone, or a voice command. These applications are coming at us fast, evolving into the next iteration before the first has been adopted, and addressing needs we didn't even know we had. It's hard to know which will stick, which should be incorporated now, and what's coming tomorrow.

To make any - or all - of them happen, you need to build a solid foundation. That foundation begins with connectivity. In other words, a smart city is a connected city.

Once there is connectivity, you can be as smart as you want to be.

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connectivity

Connectivity is basically infrastructure – fiber, Wi-Fi, conduits, pathways, vaults, fiber, switches, etc.

Done right, your master development is technology-enabled and poised for the future. Done right, your connected district will provide a frictionless, secure and data-rich environment that can be used to improve lives and attract professional partners who share your vision.

Doing it right is the catch. WhiteSpace contends that building your Smart "Connected" City relies on six strategies for connectivity to ensure your master plan vision.

scroll down for
The 6 Connectivity Strategies Every Developer Should Know

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control

As a developer one of your primary goals is controlling expenses. For instance, developing a master site within a municipality/ county may provide the opportunity for significant savings with the use of existing infrastructure such as a robust fiber network – a win for the infrastructure owner (income) and a win for the developer (saving of time and money). Sometimes, however, saving comes at a significant cost.

Control, as a strategy for connectivity, will allow you to make decisions as well as own and govern data. This is important because your owned infrastructure and network will realize revenue (and yield savings) in the short and long term. This control, control of the infrastructure, is worthy of investigation, and, more than likely, worthy of your investment.

infrastructure

Of course, connectivity starts with the actual infrastructure. It is important to design and incorporate all options for maximum connectivity. First on the list: a carrier-grade fiber-based network which will provide fast, seamless connectivity. Then, consider accessibility and opportunity and include rooftop antennas, wireless backhaul, 5G and WiFi to extend and maximize your smart city network. In addition, technology assets such as smart street lighting, smart furniture and digital signage may seem like whistles and bells, but they are integral to a strong, flexible network and labeled as assets for good reason.

A word about the importance of design: Without a plan and a well-thought design for connecting and utilizing the infrastructure, you will have incurred a cost, but not made an investment. Remember you are planning for today and tomorrow. Ensuring that the network infrastructure is situated for connection and propagation, underground vaults and above ground technology assets are optimally placed, and rooftop antennas are unimpeded are essential considerations in your infrastructure design.

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capacity

Simply put, more is not always better, but enough is. Having made the investment in your development's infrastructure, and planned a thoughtful design, the capacity of your system is an equally important strategy. Questions to ask:

- How many buildings will you serve? What will they require in terms of connectivity?
- How many carriers are required access?
- Are you interested in revenue producing opportunities by inviting third party providers?
- And the big unknown: how do we prepare for the future?

Answering these questions will reveal the "how much do we need" answer.   While we can't know for certain what the future holds, we can be confident that our collective appetite for technology is growing. Capacity for future scalability will ensure your investment is safeguarded.

open access   Flexibility for others to use

If the past 25 years show us anything, there is little doubt that innovators will continue to invent. From large, slow, difficult to use CPUs to smart mobile devices that quite literally handle communication, education and business with the touch of a finger, we are not going backward. New applications—new technology—are happening and changing even as you read this.

What do we choose? How can we keep up? What are the ongoing costs? These are all valid concerns. However, a better question might be: how can we participate in the latest and greatest technology? Now that's a good question.

Technology needs to be tested. And, if you recall, you control the infrastructure and have capacity. Why not invite these forward-thinkers to your party? Chances are they are looking for just such a place (and may already have your Smart City in their sites). There are mutually beneficial relationships to be made. Fostering these partnerships with an open access environment proactively future proofs and makes your smart city relevant!

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data sharing

This is definitely not a "I'm going to take my ball and go home" environment! As the owner, you are providing the field and the equipment. You are also running the concession stand. In terms of technology that means that you own most of the data collected in your district. And, what you don't own, you can request.

Data is raw information that can be collected and analyzed into concise and useful knowledge. It is extremely valuable to the shrewd developer and provides very specific information about your smart city visitors:

- Demographics (gender, age, income level)
- Frequency of visits
- Locations visited
- Dwell times
- Spending

In addition, with data, you have the ability to automate:

- crisis management protocols,
- energy management,
- on-demand parking and pricing strategies, even
- when to empty the trash.

All for these, and many more, have very real implications. As drivers for business decisions that lead to greater savings and increased profits (a recurring theme), access to all the data in your smart city is vital.

Of course, your tenants will also want and need data relevant to their businesses. Therefore, a clear governance policy regarding data ownership, sharing and privacy must be implemented for the good and legal protection of everyone concerned.

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security

As controller of the infrastructure (and network), the master developer has an obligation to its residents, tenants, guests, and all those who participate in its use to provide a secure environment on which to conduct business and manage lives.

Broken into three areas – Digital (information), Physical, Cyber – each is integral to a safe and stable environment:

Digital Security
Safeguards information (confidentiality, integrity, availability) through internal systems and protocols

Physical Security
Monitors and addresses physical safety through access control, CCTV and a variety of sensors

Cyber Security
Protects against unauthorized cyber threats, such as phishing and data breaches

Plainly said, security is not optional, and quite frankly, if not proactively pursued, it will wreak havoc on an otherwise strong business model. Choose your systems and your partners wisely.

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You're envisioning a Smart City. Don't stop there. Look closer, and deeper. The future of your Smart City is reliant on connectivity but know this: not all connectivity is created equal. Position your Smart "Connected" City and your company for the future by ensuring its resilience and durability.

Connect with WhiteSpace to learn how your master plan Smart City vision can become actual.

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