

Background

The Government of Canada introduced the **Smart Cities Challenge**, a competition, open to all municipalities, local or regional governments and Indigenous communities across Canada. The Smart Cities approach aims to achieve meaningful outcomes for residents by leveraging the fundamental benefits that data and connected technology have to offer, through:

- Openness
- Integration
- Transferability
- Collaboration

The current competition offers the following prizes:

- One prize of up to \$50M – regardless of size of population
- Two prizes of up to \$10M – communities under 500,000 population
- One prize of up to \$5M – communities under 30,000 population

Interested communities were invited to submit a Challenge Statement, defining the outcomes expected from the project that will be funded by the prize money. The deadline to submit the application and Challenge Statement was April 24, 2018.

Analysis

A project team was formed, consisting of City staff and external partners from Agilis Networks, Cambrian College, Collège Boréal, Health Sciences North, Laurentian University, Northern Centre for Advanced Technology (NORCAT), and Rainbow District School Board.

A collaborative approach was used to develop the proposal. The team provided input, guidance and direction regarding the tasks related to community engagement, evaluation of ideas, and high level design of potential projects.

To ensure a fulsome engagement process, the City engaged citizens for challenge ideas aligned with the City's strategic priorities, through the Communications and Community Engagement Section and the City's "Over to You" online engagement platform.

The online engagement period took place between March 20 and April 6, 2018. In that time there were more than 770 visits to the Smart Cities Challenge Submission page. More than 100 residents engaged with us via an online survey, collaborated with us through an idea brainstorming portal, and were provided an avenue to pose questions about the challenge submission.

The online survey asked respondents to rate the most important priority, based on a set of potential priorities provided in the Smart Cities Challenge Applicant Guide. The priorities were ranked by our respondents in the following order:

1. Economic opportunity
2. Mobility
3. Empowerment and inclusion
4. Healthy living and recreation
5. Environment
6. Safety

The brainstorming platform presented an opportunity to collaborate with residents and learn about their big ideas on how we could use data and technology to improve our community. 31 ideas were generated with 65 votes placed. The results favoured improving city services and enhancing community connectivity while driving economic development.

On April 27, the community was offered an opportunity to be informed and provide feedback at a panel discussion featuring key City staff and community partners. The goal of the panel was to further the discussion about the Smart Cities Challenge and what it could mean for our community.

The information from the engagement period was collected, ideas were evaluated based on the Smart Cities Challenge criteria, and several distinct themes emerged. Based on these themes, and relating the ideas to the most popular priorities, the project team developed the proposal, as outlined below.

The Challenge Statement

The Challenge Statement, as defined in the application process, is a single sentence, no more than 50 words in length, that defines the outcome or outcomes a community aims to achieve by implementing its smart cities proposal. The Challenge Statement was to be measurable, ambitious and achievable through the proposed use of data and connected technology.

The following Challenge Statement was submitted:

The City of Greater Sudbury is mining for new economic growth and social inclusion by developing a Smart City Living Lab to provide an inclusive technological platform for innovation that improves residents' lives, adds new tech jobs and nurtures bright minds looking for a place to shine.

This application proposed a connected smart city platform that could be used as a Smart City Living Lab where innovative partners would be invited to develop, test and build smart city solutions that address the needs of residents. The project would provide standards-based connectivity throughout the city and sought to create a platform for economic growth where innovation partners, students or entrepreneurs could effectively plug in to test new technologies at a low set-up cost. The platform would have enabled connectivity to physical components that could be equipped with sensors like traffic lights, to citizens and to aggregated Open Data. The Lab would be supported by marketing its availability to innovators both locally within, and beyond the City of Greater Sudbury by a process that facilitated low risk development for innovators and for citizens.

For citizens, the proposal would remove socio-economic barriers to digital access by adding fibre based Wifi access in areas of need. Also, the plan was to provide a basic level of Wifi connectivity within the town centres creating a lab platform where an innovation partner could be assured that their digital applications could be accessed by citizens. Additionally, this proposal included partnerships with school boards, colleges, the local university and other local organizations to create awareness and education opportunities to prepare people for work in the digital economy.

Next Steps

Finalists for the competition were announced on June 1, 2018. Over 200 communities from across Canada submitted their ideas, of these 20 were selected as finalists to receive \$250K to further develop their ideas towards the selection of 4 winners of the final full award amounts. There were only 3 finalists from Ontario and despite the great work by the project team, the Greater Sudbury's submission was not selected. The process presented a valuable opportunity to start forging partnerships and increasing momentum in moving Greater Sudbury into the Smart City/Digital City realm. The Government of Canada also stated that 'two more competitions of the Challenge' are planned and we should 'stay tuned for details'.

The City is nearing the completion of a new IT Strategic Plan which will provide an opportunity to embed the approaches anticipated in the Smart Cities application. Specifically, using engagement to define what citizens want, partnering with other organizations and leveraging external funding when available. So, expect the new IT Strategic Plan to position the City to respond to other opportunities. Staff plan on seeking funding sources, strengthening existing partnerships and developing new ones, to achieve some of the outcomes that were contemplated in the Smart Cities Challenge application.