BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

Smart City · The entrepreneur's / startup's perspective

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1 · Key Partners

– Technology providers
– Investors
– Consulting firms

For each partner, it is helpful to explicitly define what exactly they contribute: data, infrastructure, regulatory framework, or public trust.

Smart City perspective: The city is a co-creator, not just a customer—the quintuple helix.

2 · Key Activities

– Product Development and Operations
– Sales and Support

Without compliance with public procurement regulations, data management, and city standards, a solution cannot be scaled in practice, even if it works technically.

Smart City perspective: Pilot design in living labs and integration with city data.

7 · Key Resources

– Technology, know-how
– Financial capital

Operational data (sensor data, user behavior) is a strategic resource in its own right. You need to explicitly define what data you need access to from the city and what data you generate yourself, including issues of ownership and privacy.

Smart City perspective: Operational data is a strategic resource. Define ownership and access to it.

3 · Value Proposition

– Novelty and innovation
– Lower costs / risk
– Increased comfort and accessibility

It is advisable to define value not only in commercial terms but also in relation to measurable public goals. Cities and public investors make decisions based on demonstrable impact, not just on the business case.

Smart City perspective: Back up value with measurable goals: CO_2, renewable energy share, air quality, etc.

4 · Customer Relationships

– Personalised approach
– User community

In addition to the relationship with the end user, the institutional relationship with the city is also crucial: political support (buy-in) and cooperation with the relevant department often determine whether a solution is adopted more than its technical quality alone.

Smart City perspective: The institutional relationship with the city often matters more than the technology.

6 · Distribution Channels

– Direct sales
– Online channels
– Partner distribution

It is effective to leverage existing municipal digital infrastructure and communication channels (open data platforms, municipal apps, information kiosks) rather than building a parallel distribution system. The choice of distribution channel is therefore also a collaborative decision.

Smart City perspective: Leverage existing municipal platforms and apps.

5 · Customer Segments

– Paying customers
– Secondary users
– B2B / B2C / B2G distinctions

In smart city projects, value is often created for multiple groups simultaneously: citizens, the municipality (local government), and local businesses—even if only one of them is paying. It's worth mapping out the benefits separately for each group, even when they aren't the direct payers.

Smart City Perspective: Value is created for multiple groups. The customer and the user may be two different segments.

8 · Cost Structure

– Fixed costs
– Variable costs

A portion of the infrastructure costs (installation, permits, network connection) may be borne or co-financed by the city or a partner. It is necessary to identify which costs can be covered by a public entity and which must be borne by the business owner.

Smart City perspective: The city may co-finance the infrastructure.

9 · Sources of Revenue

– Sales / Subscriptions
– Licensing Fees

In addition to direct user fees, smart city models also include brokerage/data fees and capacity leasing (e.g., reselling surplus energy from solar power plants, providing access to anonymized data). Diversifying revenue across multiple network participants reduces dependence on a single customer.

Smart City perspective: Consider brokerage and data fees as well, not just user fees.

Zdroje: Giourka et al. (2019), Energies · Shetty et al. (2020), BAM Conference · viktorbenes.org