

## **A Smart City Starts and Ends with a Smart Community: Learn to become Community SMART and to Invest in Your People**

**Mark Reeson**

In a world where technology is all around us and we continue to be challenged to save more time and money through the immediacy of automation, there is a huge danger of forgetting a key factor behind any change, it involves people.

Having worked with many 'Smart Specialists' and invested my time to contrast the approaches being taken through some of the latest Smart Cities, it is becoming more apparent that the 'Internet of Things' which has gradually become the 'Internet of Everything' has a potential to make a Smart City, a faceless city, or rather a faceless community. A city and its identity is based on what it looks like and what it does, but mostly on its cultural and social values. Therefore, a truly Smart City must start and end, with its own Smart Community.

However, before we all start to consider throwing out all the technology, it is important to recognise that the community that we have will need to be supported and at certain times, directed by the technology. The key word to all this success is balance, so that the technology that we use adds value to "The City and its Community" in a way that it is FOR ALL and that it does not leave behind some members of our valued and unique society that has been built up of centuries.



***So, what exactly is a Smart Community and what does it mean to become Community SMART?***

Starting quite simply, people are impacted by their living or working environment, whether a city, an organisation or a province or region. The impact can be evaluated using six key factors, each one as equally important individually, but when combined, creating a powerful sense of well-being and integrated inclusion FOR ALL.

The six factors that have to be identified and then evaluated in each city or community are as follows:

- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Efficiency
- ✓ Livability
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Prosperity
- ✓ Sustainability

These six factors are generally referenced by organisations or authorised bodies as Social Responsibilities, whether these are personal or corporate. Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) is that undertaken by a business approach so that it contributes to a sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all internal and external stakeholders from its plans and its actions. However, CSR is a concept with many definitions and practices all wrapped up inside.

One of these key practices, is that of Social Responsibility, which is an idea that businesses, governments or people of authority should balance the profit-making activities with sociological beneficial activities which involve developing businesses and organisational bodies with a positive relationship to the society in which they operate.

One of the biggest drivers towards CSR and to making a difference to the world and to our communities was the release in January 2016 of the United Nations Development Goals when they issued seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the plan in place, the intention of the UN is that over the coming fifteen years, these new goals would be applied universally to all, with countries mobilising efforts to end all forms of poverty, to fight inequality and to also tackle climate change ensuring that no single body of people are left behind.

It was whilst reviewing the SDGs in the Autumn of 2017, that it became apparent that the UN strategy is in many ways aligned with the SMART Sustainability Modelling programme which has identified a FOR ALL strategy. This alignment led the team to then identify how the Smart City approach is also integrated and so the City SMART initiative that was started by M R Project Solutions Ltd in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was further adapted to include the UN's vision with the SMART Vision 2017 and the SMART Model to enhance its value and to finally develop the Community SMART Concept.



The goals of the concept are that each community is unique and so that it calls FOR ALL communities, whether their members are rich, poor or somewhere in between, to promote prosperity whilst also protecting and investing in their own surroundings. With the recognition that ending poverty cannot be achieved without a strategy to build economic growth within their own community this would also lead to further social needs being addressed that are specific to the community at large.

Much as the SDGs cannot be made legally binding, the communities and the authorities within them are expected to take ownership of their own areas of responsibility and to then, once a platform of success has been established, create a network to combine regional and then national frameworks of values and commitments. However, without an approach to measure this progress, the idea of the SDGs or a Community SMART programme would be idyllic but essentially toothless, which is why the team created and continue today to develop further the SMART Metrics, which become specific for each and every community that undertakes the programme.



*So, with this concept now firmly established, how does the Community SMART programme begin and how do you start to develop a new approach with a benefit FOR ALL to make a change for the better in the future?*

Let us begin with the first of the six factors, Safety.

### ***Safety – Creating a Safe Community***



A safe community is a **“Happy Community”**. That sounds simple but is very true. However, creating an environment where people can flourish needs time and commitment BY ALL. Firstly, there is a need to identify threats before they can happen and to proactively promote and implement the aversion of danger. One of the best ways for the community to act SMART is through the sharing of information, which requires an open and liberal information flow, without any restrictions and across the different

jurisdictions, collating findings with regard to research, development, science and technology, leading to an improvement of the authorities and the communities' situational awareness. With this simple step this can initiate the aim to safeguard lives and to protect the property across the whole community and FOR ALL.

The key aspect of having a safe community, as mentioned earlier, is an increased situational awareness. Communities need to be able to improve the perception of the environmental elements and the events occurring within that environment with respect to the time or the space in which they are in. Being able to ascertain a comprehension of the meaning of this information and then project this status when one or more of the variables change such a time or an event, is key to the safety of the people within the community.

Situational awareness, is a result of four key elements being brought together and then assessed, simultaneously to draw a picture of perception in the mind of the viewer. These four elements are:

- ✓ [Situational Understanding](#) – Applying analysis and judgement to the current situation
- ✓ [Situational Assessment](#) – Achieving, acquiring and/or maintaining your current awareness
- ✓ [Mental Models](#) – A set of well defined, highly organised yet dynamic knowledge structures developed over time with personal experience
- ✓ [Sense Making](#) – A motivated and continuous effort to understand the connections between people's behaviours, certain locations or places and any relevant events or occurrences

### ***Efficiency – Planning the Improvements***



The aim to efficiency planning for a community is to **“Maximise the Efficiency of Events”** such as housing or transport development and redevelopment. To achieve this, the parties delivering these events need to define a process of communication between the developments through open and transparent platforms. By informing the community of such developments, allows them to make decisions which can help them to plan how to avoid the congested or under construction areas. In addition, this would allow local utilities to optimise opportunities to inspect any underground assets whilst they are exposed limiting the ground breaking disruptions to a minimum.

Well run communities have authorities or government departments information hubs which can collect, collate and distribute insightful information to the necessary bodies so that a rapid response to a situation can be carried out or observed. By having this centralised location of data and information generation, it makes it clearer FOR ALL how certain actions could then impact all the community. To assist further with this, as long as the information passed meets

regulatory constraints or acceptability, this can then be used through public and private partnerships to allow the community to flourish.

Furthermore, this can help organisations within the community to address issues, provide a higher quality service and ensure that the community's essential services remain well run despite the changes or any potential adversity within the region. Efficiency however, relies on greater connectivity, supporting the argument earlier that *“Technology can and does have a key part to play to support the people within your community”*. As a community then starts to develop and grow, this develops an increased probability on mobility and a greater need by those moving for an accessibility to information.

Herein, lays a possible risk to your community. With the continued growth of your community through its greater efficiency, comes a greater investment requirement for informational needs and for different modes of delivery to improve both social and economic mobility. After all, as the community grows and looks to create greater revenue and investment for its area, it is imperative that the infrastructure of communication and accommodation meets this demand. Having a successful and affluent community, brings with it environmental, economic and public health challenges but finding the right balance with this against the enhancement of the area to create one rich in innovation and intelligence creates community wide integrated systems and the first signs of becoming Community SMART.

### ***Livability – Your Quality of Life Matters***



**“Communities Thrive when they are Proactive”**. Having this foresight and positive attitude means that the feeling within is one which is looking to stay ahead of any problems and that when they seek to resolve a problem, they look at long term, sustainable solutions and not the simplest or quickest fixes.

With this approach and with a strong view towards longevity, the area thrives through the avoidance or the restrictions that can come through infrastructure fatigue. Changes are made when they are needed to be made and are always made after a thorough evaluation and a clear understanding of the added value this change will bring to the community. For example, if the age of the population in the community rises and the demand for more homes with assistance is identified, then the changes to the community's priorities need to be addressed. Equally, if the average age of the population starts to move towards the millennials, then a change in entertainment or virtual cloud based needs may be required.

The attitude is a strong positive one which says yes to change, but only when it is the right change and at the right time for the community.

This strength comes from the longevity view that it takes and through its approach to creating the previously mentioned sustainable solutions. A community's livability is about so much more than the way it looks. Livable communities have to wrestle with the multiple priorities

placed upon them, to reduce congestion, to safely manage water and waste and to continue to create the right infrastructure for a continuous and sustained success.

The community's ability to proactively assess where the relevant infrastructure repairs are necessary and how to balance these against other opportunities to improve the living conditions FOR ALL, where no one is constrained or unfairly treated because of their race, religion, colour or creed is a battle that is fought on a daily basis to create such a harmonious environment.

*“The community and the people within it are always viewing long term solutions and not the short term gains”* and this strategy creates a Smart Community which is stable and where everyone associated with it, feels valued.

By having the community support itself by helping with the approach to change is the best way of problem solving with structure by integrating local experience with external expertise to assist in managing the requirements and the needs of infrastructure for the community at large. This vibrant and transparent environment opens up information to more people helping to expose or reveal critical issues and promote livability in a more timely and cost effective manner.

### ***Health – Bringing Renewed Life into the Community***



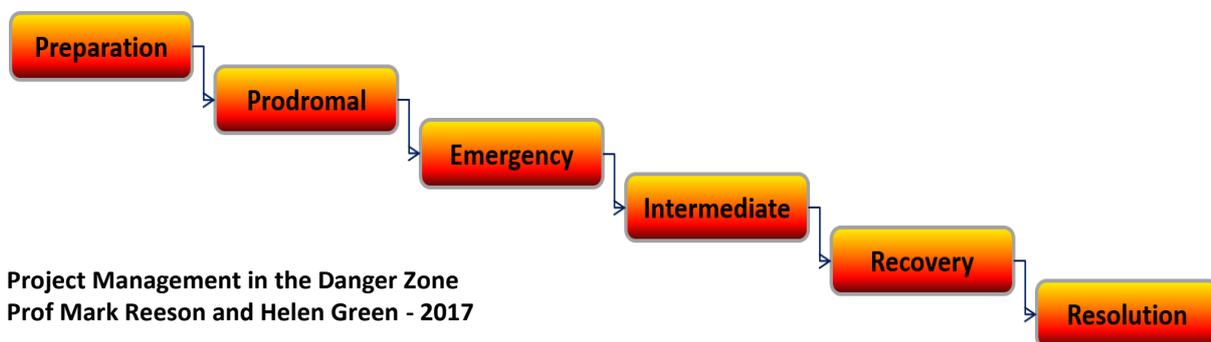
Community health touches on many different services, departments and non-profit organisations, by interacting for the benefit of the community. Each of these departments have to **“Learn to work together with the Community’s Support to generate justified decisions during planning and at times of emergency or crisis”**.

Whether they are responding to an outbreak of a disease or safeguarding against the threat of a future one, this approach and their ability to collaborate is essential to any success to repel the risk to the health of the community. *“By being able to work together to predict future illnesses before the community become sick, by finding transmission patterns by visualising real-time and historical threat data, these departments remain on the front-line to keep the community healthy, happy and enables a future of safe and stable growth”*.

By developing these shared insights across and central platform, this ensures that multiple audiences can stay readily informed and instantly prepared to fulfil their routine and emergency roles as needed. The community authorities can then reinforce this approach by establishing protocols at certain key moments or events so that should certain conditions occur or situations arise, there is clear direction by those that are viewed to give the community guidance. This builds confidence not only in the government authority but in the community as well, knowing that if the worst does happen, someone is there to provide help, support and guidance.

One such approach that has been used and published previously, is from the document “Project Management in the Danger Zone” which explains the six steps of the Faulkner Disaster Lifecycle from the preparation and pre-disaster stages, through the event and then helping the community rebuild post disaster. This structural approach is already being reviewed in certain parts of the Middle East being utilised against flooding and wind disaster.

Having such a formal approach leads to the government body within the community being able to trust its emergency planning techniques, testing them regularly and visibly to the community public, demonstrating proficiency and competence.



**Project Management in the Danger Zone**  
Prof Mark Reeson and Helen Green - 2017

<https://pmworldlibrary.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/pmwj52-Nov2016-Reeson-Green-project-management-in-danger-zone-commentary.pdf>

### ***Prosperity – Investing in the Community***



**“Communities prosper when they work together, supporting each other to identify market trends that can attract investments”.** Whether they are appealing to potential residents or businesses, economic development planners help communities grow, by emphasising the importance of the right investment in the right location to maximise its worth.

In competitive environments where neighbouring communities or cities vie for capital improvement funding, tourism and much needed revenue, the economic planners must demonstrate the potential for a clear and substantial value of a new development site and commercial property. To be truly successful, they must demonstrate to the community, government bodies and local commerce sufficient relevant and accurate data to entice its citizens through insight into the changes that such an investment can make to their lifestyle and demographic characteristics.

To better prepare a community for prosperity, identifying and connecting the right investors and entrepreneurs to the right information so that they have time to recognise and implement such investment opportunities. By having the right people understanding the changes to the needs and demands of the community, this can encourage those willing to invest by offering this information to obtain greater visibility of the opportunity being offered. This will then

avoid chance, or blind investment into the community based on hope rather than fact leading to regular foreclosures and reduction in the attraction of the community's home. This regular turnover of business can create disharmony and start to affect house prices and the popularity for mobility into the area, instead in some cases, causing a prolonged exodus. *"Community prosperity means FOR ALL and not just for the few, creating an environment of growth that does not discriminate against individuals, therefore reducing or in some cases eliminating poverty within the community"*.

This however can only be achieved with Financial Sustainability Planning. The planning needs to be viewed both on a long-term and a short-term basis. The community needs to know their finances for six months to a year, but then to challenge itself to plan where it will also like to be in five years.

Financial sustainability planning is only one part of the overall plan, allowing the community to concentrate on their real purpose and to focus on its achievements. The community should never lose focus on why it is there and what it stands for, it should never lose its traditions or its identity. Of course it is important to take care of the finances, after all, as I was told in January 2017 at a sustainability event in New York, "You can't do anything with empty pockets", but never forget what you are trying to achieve as a community and for the community.

### ***Sustainability – Building a Community for Future Generations***



To maximise sustainability, communities must connect with their government bodies to work together to fight deforestation, uphold the community values and health and to preserve the living standards FOR ALL.

When it comes to the urban planners and designers, they should use technology to balance competing interests, to fuse data from numerous sources and to communicate their intentions for the community across multiple audiences. However, one thing is as true today as it always has been, **"If you want to pass a message to others, understand your audience"**. Too much technology can be equally as bad as not enough, so know who you are sending what message to with what media.

Those sharing the messages should be able to acknowledge their own personal style of communication and then understand how that impacts the recipients (benefits/risks, why that kind of change is necessary now, what are the consequences in the future if the change will not be implemented etc.). *"Only when the sender can actively listen through effective feedback can they then adapt the style or media of the communication so that it becomes appropriate to the situation and to the needs of their audience"*.

By incorporating a strong geo-design into any planning, communities become better positioned to provide their citizens a more sustainable future without compromising the usage or the quality of its land, water or air.



One such approach that has been heavily invested into the Middle East, is the CitySMART™ model designed by M R Project Solutions Ltd. When presented last August at the UT Dallas Symposium, one of the fellow keynote speakers

described it.

“CitySMART is a model that has been designed and created to improve the performance of work based competency which covers projects, businesses, supply chain management, event management and media management to enhance how a city performs and how it can achieve more for less within the Eastern Province Municipality of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”



With the use of the Smart Modelling Concept, communities have the opportunity to benchmark their achievements and to then measure progress as they implement change. It can clearly assist each community with the recognition of its successes and identify where further improvements need to be made.

By utilising the Smart Metrics approach to change they can measure and then mature their approach in the six separate areas of community sustainability focusing on what matters to the community, when it matters.

The six areas of measurement are:

- ✓ Community Organisation Sustainability
- ✓ Community Development Sustainability
- ✓ Community Financial Sustainability
- ✓ Community Governance Sustainability
- ✓ Community Supply Chain Sustainability
- ✓ Community Environmental Sustainability

Through the metrics matrix of 242 assessment points, each community can grow and shape itself into the community it wants to be using the maturity model previously published within the PMWJ.

<http://peworldjournal.net/article/smart-sustainability-model-transforming-business>



*So where would a community start and how simple is the model to integrate into their lives?*

After you have obtained the model and its relevant supporting documentation, the community has to establish where it currently is and create firstly its baseline but then, set its goals for achievement. As the community drafts its

original Strategic Smart Plan, it will begin to identify the approach it wants to take and how it chooses to optimise efficiency and to minimise its waste. No-one comes in and tells you what your community should be doing and there are no methodologies, just a simple framework, governed by you, implemented by you and delivering your needs.

*“The secret behind a community, lays within the community and its people”.*

By bringing people together the community and by understanding what they want to for their city, town, village or business this increases buy-in and the potential for further investment for the future generations.



After all the technology is taken away, after all the measurements have been taken and progress recorded, the citizens of the community, will do what the citizens have always done best, they remember to Think SMART.

In closing, there is a simple and straight forward message for those that pursue the Smart future with Smart Cities and Smart technologies. Remember, a city or a simple community can be SMART without hi-tech instruments and an endless and seamless connectivity. These are tools to support the city, not to become the city.



A city or any form of community is made up of individuals who live there, those that visit and the way that they work together, for the greater good. It is the people that are impacted by their own living environment and so it is those people that should identify and drive the change making them feel individually responsible and committed to their community. Whether the end goal is increased safety, greater efficiency, a higher quality of livability, stronger health, greater prosperity or finally a fresher and cleaner environment, being truly SMART as a community is about those that live there.



***Think SMART, Act SMART, Live SMART***

## About the Author



**Mark Reeson, RPP, FAPM, PMP AfCGI**

United Kingdom



**Professor Mark Reeson** is a project management specialist with over thirty years' experience. A Fellow of the Association for Project Management, he has been involved in many project and programme consultative roles. Most recently Mark has been working with the Saudi Arabian Municipality of the Eastern Province to change the way that project management is carried out within the region, using his newly recognised SMART Sustainability Modelling for project and business management.

He was appointed a Professor of Project Management at the University of Business and Technology, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which was a culmination of his work in training and consulting in the region on matters that relate to project management, supply chain management and sustainability modelling. Having previously held the position of a specialist Sustainability Management Global Advisor he has moved forward from that position and now regularly supports businesses and projects alike in streamlining their approaches to change and strategic development providing greater longevity in their business planning.

Having started his career in the Royal Air Force, Mark has continued to develop by working and delivering projects in multiple fields of industry ranging from the nuclear environment, into pharmaceuticals, finance and also the international sporting fields.

Mark has developed his role within project management through further experience with the nuclear industry and is now the owner of M R Project Solutions Limited where he has fulfilled the role of Project Management Advisor for the last three and a half years covering every continent. His role is very much client facing and Mark now almost permanently travels the world meeting clients, developing solutions and providing training for their project families either directly through his own organisation or in support of others. Mark's main role is the development and the consultation with many organisations on ensuring they choose the right approach or methodology to deliver their projects and then follows this up with the correct bespoke training programmes for how their company wants to share this learning with their staff members.

Mark has changed the approach to learning by the ongoing development of his original 'Living Learning' programme by introducing a new learning experience for all taking the classroom format and making it come to life with his popular and original 'Applied Learning' simulation

training and coaching technique. He has taken this forward over the past few years to introduce this training style so that project management learning and behaviour has now started to be delivered into the schools and colleges looking to develop the technical, behavioural and contextual skills and attitudes of their students.

As a regular public speaker Mark now shares his experience, knowledge and commitment with those associations wanting to move forward in a more sustainable and successful manner.

Mark's next aim is to develop this further and to spread project management knowledge and competency to many more organisations worldwide, having already started with successful deliveries globally.

Mark can be contacted at [mark.reeson@btinternet.com](mailto:mark.reeson@btinternet.com)