Congressional Caucus on Smart Cities
Living in the Future:
A Closer Look at Today's Trends in Smart Cities
June 5, 2019 Event Recap

The Congressional Caucus on Smart Cities held its "kick-off" meeting June 5 to a packed room of over 50 Capitol Hill staffers. The Caucus, co-chaired by Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke (D-NY) and Congresswoman Susan W. Brooks (R-IN), was formed in the 115th Congress as a bipartisan group of members dedicated to bringing American communities into the 21st century through innovation and technological change. The Caucus embraces smart technology as a means to make our communities more sustainable, resilient, efficient, livable, and competitive in a world in which technology is constantly advancing.

The event was formed to cover the essential pillars of smart city development -- city leadership, connectivity, energy and education. Panelists included:

- Steve Crout, Director of Policy and Resilience Programs, Smart Cities Council
- Brittney Kohler, Program Director, Transportation and Infrastructure, National League of Cities
- Alice Tornquist, Vice President of Spectrum and Technology Policy, Qualcomm
- Melissa Lavinson, Senior Vice President for Government and External Affairs, Pepco Holdings
- Stan Fendley, Director, Legislative & Regulatory Policy, Corning Incorporated

Charlyn Stanberry, Chief of Staff to Representative Clarke, opened the Caucus event and spoke to the commitment of the Caucus to work with Congressional Representatives and Smart Cities stakeholders to address key issues such as mobility, connectivity, sustainability, workforce and more. Charlyn and her colleague Christopher Cox have worked tirelessly to establish the Caucus as key forum for Smart Cities stakeholders to convene, share ideas and best practices, and recommend policy proposals.

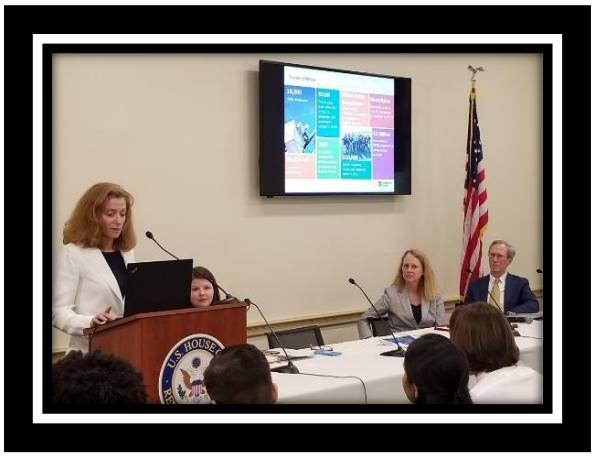
Becky Knox, Senior Director, Electric Transportation and Customer Solutions, at the Edison Electric Institute, then provided remarks as the sponsor of the event. Becky spoke of the electric company's long-standing presence in communities across the country and their commitment to providing reliable, safe, affordable and increased clean energy services. She focused on the tremendous opportunity in leveraging existing investments in smarter energy infrastructure to help local communities reach their smart community objectives. And while each community may have different reasons for wanting to be smart, all smart communities share common attributes—and they all are powered by smart connections and by smarter energy infrastructure, which is a foundational piece in helping a smart community function and grow.

Steve Crout served as the panel moderator and set the stage by providing background on the need for Smart Cities and some of the opportunities and challenges. For instance, experts anticipate a significant population shift to urban centers around the world from 55 percent today to 68 percent by 2050. The deployment of information and communications technology can help cities become more livable, workable and sustainable, according to the Smart Cities Council. The Council serves as a technology neutral, trusted advisor to cities and holds an annual "Readiness Challenge" in which cities compete for a full-year Readiness Program. Steve also spoke to legislation recently introduced in Congress to coordinate federal agency programs around Smart Cities – the Smart Cities and Communities Act.

Each and every city's needs, culture, assets and vision are uniquely different. In this respect, no one technology or solution fits all when it comes to Smart Cities. Brittney Kohler said that while cities welcome the opportunity to work with technology and solutions providers, it is important to begin with a basic understanding of a city's overall constituency and architecture. And then begin discussions on how technology can help a city achieve common goals like liability, workability and sustainability. Brittney also spoke of the important role public policy plays in laying the groundwork for Smart Cities. Issues such as privacy, security and interoperability must be addressed if Smart Cities projects are to be scaled. Ultimately, Smart City technologies and services must serve the needs of the citizenship.

Connectivity is a key pillar of Smart Cities. Alice Tornquist spoke about how wireless communications technologies connect city services across the board from communications, public safety, energy, transportation and more. Alice described how Qualcomm's revolutionary 5G technology will provide significantly enhanced services with faster speeds, lower latency, greater bandwidth and greater security. This will serve to empower the Massive Internet of Things, transform mission critical services, deliver autonomous vehicles, and enable new immersive experiences such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence.

Energy is also a key pillar of Smart Cities. Melissa Lavinson spoke of Exelon's (parent company of PEPCO) commitment to efficiently deliver safe, affordable, reliable, and clean energy and innovative services that benefit customers and communities. She stated that Exelon is constantly working to provide smart energy solutions to enable its customers to better understand and manage their individual energy needs. In fact, the company hopes to be the platform through which customers seamlessly connect to energy networks, devices, and information.



Benefits include:

- Improving reliability by creating a smarter grid that can "self-heal" and minimize disruptions
- Ensuring resiliency and security against threats - cybersecurity attacks and extreme weather events
- Enabling customers to adopt DG, e.g. solar, storage, and ultimately transact as prosumers in an open marketplace
- Achieving sustainability, mobility, public health and other objectives, through electrification – transport, buildings, etc
- Providing better city services for citizens – broader infrastructure role, e.g., water, gas, leveraging data, technology and digital

Stan Fendley provided participants with a unique video demonstration of fiber optic sensing technology that can serve cities in multiple ways. Corning's invention of the first low-loss optical fiber, over forty years ago, ignited the critical spark that began a communications revolution that forever changed the world. Fiber optic sensing works by measuring tiny changes in the light occurring in an optical fiber when the fiber encounters vibration, strain or temperature change. It can be deployed to continuously monitor vehicle movement, human traffic, digging activity, seismic activity, temperatures, structural integrity, liquid and gas leaks, and many other conditions and activities.

Response to the panel discussion was enthusiastic. The audience, largely staff from Congressional offices, asked several questions related to Smart Cities development. This included questions regarding public safety and the need to ensure redundancy in power and communications systems, the need to provide technology access to all communities, privacy, security, 5G infrastructure and capacity, and the utilization of fiber optic sensing technology in the U.S. The panelists were able to lend their expertise as feedback to each of the questions and were widely applauded at the meetings end.

We will keep you advised of future meetings of the Congressional Smart Cities Caucus and relevant policy actions.