

## Spokane, Wash., Adds Verizon to List of Smart City Partners

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(TNS) — Spokane has added Verizon to its list of partners for its Smart Cities project, an initiative that aims to add technology that improves air quality monitoring, saves energy and potentially improves traffic safety in the region.

Spokane has already partnered with Urbanova, a group of researchers and experts working to make the city more sustainable through technological development.

The group has installed air quality monitors on streetlights, designed to save energy by dimming when traffic is low. Kim Zentz, Urbanova CEO and a Washington State University professor, said most of the collaborative ideas begin in the University District and, depending on their success, could eventually launch in other areas of the city.

At a news conference with Mayor David Condon, Mrinalini Ingram, vice president of Smart Communities at Verizon, said the project's goal is to offer local versions of its technology instead of offering Spokane the same solutions tried in other communities.

"It's important that we fit the technology to the need and not the other way around," she said.

Ingram said she would like to gather feedback from the community before starting any specific projects. In other cities, she said, the company has launched projects that help local governments gather data on dangerous intersections to find out more about traffic accidents. The company also has parking apps which are designed to reduce the congestion drivers create when looking for a parking spot by identifying open areas.

She said Verizon has worked to increase broadband access to low-income communities. In Sacramento, California, she said, the company installed Wi-Fi in 27 parks to ensure children without internet in their home could still do their homework.

“It’s important to at least have it in their community,” she said, “ so they can be a part of the digital world.”

Spokane and Urbanova have launched other smart city projects, Zentz said, such as the installation of solar panels atop university buildings. The partnership will soon install 27 more air quality monitoring devices in the University District. She said the partners plan to cover the district with sensors to help in developing solutions based on the data collected.

[Urbanova and the local smart city project](#) began in 2015 when Spokane was chosen as one of the first 10 cities to participate in the Envision America program, a nonprofit that explores urban innovation. Urbanova has worked to assist Spokane in using innovative energy, water, waste and air quality technologies.

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