

# Shaping the Future: Smart City Expo Miami Unites Innovators Around Future-Ready Communities

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, September 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The second day of the [Smart City Expo Miami](#) was a vibrant showcase of innovation and collaboration: bringing together thought leaders, startups, government officials, and urban planners from around the world. The event's theme, Future Ready Communities, served as a springboard for discussions on how cities can evolve to meet the growing challenges of sustainability, equity, and rapid urbanization in the 21st century.



SCEM24 - Speakers

Attendees were treated to a diverse range of presentations, panels, and networking opportunities that centered on the human element of smart city planning – emphasizing health, well-being, and the environment. From AI-powered urban solutions to new ideas on creating carbon-positive cities, the second day of the expo was an inspiring reminder of the possibilities that lie ahead when technology and people come together.

“

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*Bernardo Scheinkman,  
Founder & CEO-Smart Cities  
Americas*

People-Centered Innovation and Smart City Solutions  
The day began with opening remarks from Bernardo Scheinkman, the curator of the event, who set the tone by emphasizing the need for smart cities to be centered around people.

“When we talk about cities, we are talking about innovation –things we need to do –and these young companies can

help,” Scheinkman said, underscoring the importance of human-centric solutions in smart city development.

He reflected on the key takeaways from the first day, reminding the audience that health, human well-being, and environmental sustainability are at the core of creating cities that are not only technologically advanced but also livable and equitable. “We created this event to work globally,” he noted, sharing that the event would have lasting impact through post-event participation.

### AI and the Evolution of Urban Spaces

One of the standout presentations came from Paul Doherty, President and CEO of The Digit Group, who provided a thought-provoking glimpse into the future of AI-powered cities. His talk, titled *Emerging Smart Cities: AI, Metaverse, and the Future of Our Cities*, explored the critical role AI will play in shaping urban environments in the years to come.

“AI is the currency of complexity,” he said, arguing that the technology will help cities manage the growing complexity of urban life by automating mundane tasks and freeing up human capital for more creative and impactful work. He also touched on the metaverse, describing it as a future where the physical and digital worlds will blur, allowing cities to operate in entirely new ways.

In his talk entitled *AI as a Cities’ Time Manager*, Dr. José Antonio Ondiviela, Director of the Human-Centered Intelligent Cities Research Institute in Madrid, emphasized the critical role of time in urban planning. Ondiviela asserted that time should be considered a human right. “Time is the main urban dimension,” he said, highlighting how AI can help cities manage time more efficiently by reducing travel times, optimizing city services, and improving overall quality of life. His vision of AI-enabled “adaptive cities” that can change dynamically in real time based on citizens’ needs underscored the importance of using technology to create more efficient, responsive urban environments.

### A Key Focus on Sustainability and Resilience

Sustainability was a major theme throughout the day, with several speakers diving deep into how cities can adapt to climate change while continuing to grow. Dr. Thomas Spiegelhalter, an architect, engineer, and professor at Florida International University, gave a compelling presentation on *Envisioning Carbon-Positive, Resilient Coastal Urban Environments*. He emphasized the urgency of designing cities that are not only carbon-neutral but carbon-positive – meaning they give back more to the environment than they take.

Gianluca Galletto, CEO of DG Advisors, followed with a session on *New Energy Models in Cities to Fight Climate Change*, where he discussed the importance of retrofitting existing buildings to meet new environmental standards. His session focused on practical ways cities can reduce emissions and meet their climate goals, offering solutions that can be scaled globally.

### Inclusion and Equity in Smart City Planning

Juliet Chinemelu, a lecturer at Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic in Nigeria, gave a powerful presentation on the importance of ensuring that smart city initiatives do not leave marginalized

communities behind. “A city that is not inclusive can never be sustainable,” she said, pointing out that many smart city projects, particularly in developing countries, often overlook the needs of lower-income residents. Chinemelu shared examples of how African cities are attempting to bridge this gap by creating inclusive urban spaces that provide equal access to resources, technology, and opportunities. Her message was clear: for smart cities to be truly sustainable, they must be designed with everyone in mind, regardless of gender, race, or socio-economic background. Chinemelu’s talk was a reminder that while technology can solve many of the world’s urban challenges, it must be implemented with a focus on equity.

#### Cutting-Edge Global Network

Batia Mach Shepherd, a senior innovation strategy advisor of Mashcal, presented a holistic approach for city stakeholders through G-MiC, the Global Network of Municipal Innovation Centers. By facilitating access to cutting-edge knowledge and solutions, fostering collaboration, cultivating an innovation ecosystem, and advocating for sustainable practices, G-MiC empowers cities to thrive amidst constant change.

#### Startups Leading the Way

The event also shone a spotlight on startups that are addressing critical urban challenges through innovative solutions. Four companies took the stage to pitch their ideas to a panel of experts, with each startup offering a unique approach to making cities smarter and more sustainable. Sargassum Eco Lumber, a Miami-based company led by Raquel de Antonio, won the competition with its inventive use of invasive sargassum seaweed to create eco-friendly building materials. “We’re solving two problems at once: environmental and plastic pollution,” de Antonio said, highlighting the dual benefits of her company’s approach.

The pitch session demonstrated the role that young, agile companies can play in solving some of the most pressing issues cities face today.

#### What’s Next: Networking Opportunities

Day two of the Smart City Expo Miami offered plenty of opportunities for networking, with attendees from across sectors engaging in lively discussions about the future of urban living.

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