



Chatham County

Being a part of the Smart Cities Internship program has been an amazing experience. It is so unique in how we were able to join an applied research team while serving the community. Although I've worked with numerous research groups in the past, the Chatham County Smart Sea Level Sensors project has shown me how scientists can directly impact and improve the lives of citizens by partnering with city organizations to understand the local perspective on the task at hand. I truly believe that the foundation provided by the Georgia Smart program allows these projects to succeed and grow over many months and years.

Most of my work has encompassed data analysis, uncertainty calculation, and visualization. I've had previous experience with each of these components, but it was particularly interesting to apply these skills on this project. We are building a web portal for an individual client, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), so it has been important to understand exactly how they will use the tool to know how to effectively present the data. By communicating frequently with Randall Mathews at CEMA and iterating within our internal team to develop this dashboard, I've been able to explore a lot of product development concepts that I never encountered before. This added a small business/start-up aspect to my involvement in this project, which I have been so grateful to be a part of.

Dr. Kim Cobb, Dr. Russ Clark, Lalith Polepeddi, and the rest of the project team were great at getting me acclimated with the project workflow. I've really felt like I was part of the team, and it made my work on the project so much more valuable. Everyone involved with the project was very motivated to help Chatham County face the increasing risk of rising sea levels. This is important to me personally, since I'm driven to work harder when I'm surrounded by people who are passionate about the work we're doing. I've been able to learn so much from each of the people that I've worked with, which is a main reason that I enjoy working with research teams. Everyone is focused on becoming an expert in their field, so it's inspirational to be surrounded by this energy.

-Akhil Chavan
Smart Community Corps, 2019