



As an intern on the Smart Cities for All project I had the opportunity to work with Smart Cities teams from across Georgia and research accessibility and inclusivity in their projects.

It has been strange to be a part of the Smart Cities Community Challenge while having to be critical of Smart Cities and research their dangers and common failings. Smart Cities are exciting for all of the new technologies and efficiency they bring, but Smart Cities projects often do not account for the needs and priorities of all people. Online solutions cannot serve people without internet access, and inaccessible devices and digital content excludes many individuals who have disabilities. New Smart City technologies should serve the needs of all people, and to achieve this everyone needs to be included in the design process.

While Dr. Jon Sanford provided some guidance, my partner and I were left to decide the direction of our project. To start we researched what existing inclusive communities look like to understand the what we want our own cities to become. I then focused on the projects underway in Columbus and Macon and worked with the teams to document their process and identify ways the projects could be more inclusive. We compiled all of our findings into a single report and based on our observations we suggested some best practices for inclusive Smart City design.



I am glad to have had this internship experience. This has been my first real taste of conducting an academic study, and I learned a lot about the world of Smart Cities, accessibility, and the nuts and bolts of local government projects. I have developed skills for conducting research and interviews and I have acquired strategies for working remotely. But most of all I have seen the importance of ensuring that all voices are included to create systems that benefit everyone.

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