



PRESS RELEASE

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## **Smart Cities for All launches project to define more inclusive approach to innovation for smarter cities**

***G3ict and World Enabled collaborate with AT&T and the cities of Chicago and New York to create tools for more inclusive smart city products and solutions***

Washington, DC – September, 19 2018 – The [Smart Cities for All](#) global initiative, a collaboration of G3ict and World Enabled, two nonprofits with a history of leadership in inclusive, accessible design, to launch a new project, [Inclusive Innovation for Smarter Cities](#).

The project is convening leaders from government, industry, and disability organizations to generate new knowledge and tools that define how urban innovation ecosystems, including entrepreneurs, developers, incubators, and accelerators, can create more inclusive apps and technology solutions that impact the lives of all people in cities, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

“Smart cities must also be inclusive cities,” said Mike Zeto, Vice President and General Manager of Smart Cities, AT&T. “We’re working with Smart Cities for All to help ensure that as more and more cities implement smart city strategies, they can do so with inclusion in mind from the very start. This project builds upon our collaboration with G3ict and our commitment to accessibility and creating inclusive experiences for everyone.”

As part of the new project, Smart Cities for All will lead roundtable discussions in both New York and Chicago and engage entrepreneurs and innovation experts across the United States and worldwide. The new Inclusive Innovation for Smarter Cities project will draw on the experience and insights of leading accessibility,

innovation, and disability professionals to create resources for cities around the world. The collaboration will produce a clear understanding of how urban innovation ecosystems focus on inclusion today and a set of principles and roadmap for how cities can support greater inclusion in the innovation process.

“Chicago will become a leading US city working with experts and innovators to ensure our smart city initiatives are accessible, equitable and inclusive and improve the lives of people with disabilities,” said Karen Tamley, Commissioner of the City of Chicago Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, of the project launch.

“The barriers that people with disabilities face are not a result of their disability, but rather with the inaccessibility of their environment,” said Victor Calise, Commissioner of the NYC Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities. “As a wheelchair user, if I have access to a ramp or elevator, I can function independently as a person with a disability. A truly smart city is an accessible city that enables all of its citizens to live happy, healthy and productive lives. We are looking forward to bringing together experts to share their knowledge of creating accessible infrastructures. The result will be a toolkit that lays the groundwork for future smart cities around the world.”

In 2016, the Smart Cities for All global initiative surveyed more than 250 experts around the world and found that 60% of global experts claimed that today’s Smart Cities are failing persons with disabilities because technology solutions are not designed to be accessible and inclusive. Those same experts saw great potential for existing and emerging technologies like mobile, artificial intelligence, and augmented reality, to help close the enormous digital divide in cities.

“Innovation is the exciting and fundamental key to smarter cities,” said James Thurston, G3ict’s Vice President for Global Strategy & Development. “G3ict is proud to team with AT&T and these two leading cities, New York and Chicago, to define how innovation can also help us close the digital divide for persons with disabilities and older persons.”

According to the 2016 Smart Cities for All study, the biggest challenge identified by global experts was a lack of awareness of disability, accessibility, and inclusion – including in the design and innovation process. This new Inclusive Innovation for Smarter Cities project will provide cities and urban innovation ecosystems with tools to help overcome that significant awareness barrier.

Dr. Victor Pineda, President of World Enabled, added that, “Innovations in machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and cloud computing are already improving employment, education and health outcomes for persons with

disabilities and older persons. We want to ensure tomorrow's technology leaves no one behind."

### **About G3ict**

The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies is an advocacy initiative launched in December 2006 by the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in cooperation with the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at UN DESA. Its mission is to support and help implement the goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), promoting digital accessibility and Assistive Technologies. More information can be found at <http://g3ict.org>.

### **About World Enabled**

World Enabled is a global education, communications, and strategic consulting group. It supports companies and governments with the full implementation of legal mandates that promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Its work and research initiatives focus on urban planning and inclusive urban development. With its international partners, it helps build inclusive societies where people with disabilities can fully develop their talents and reach their full potential. More information can be found at <http://worldenabled.org/>.

### **About Chicago MOPD**

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) works to meet the diverse needs of the more than 600,000 individuals with disabilities who live and work in Chicago. MOPD's goal is to make Chicago the most accessible city in the nation. MOPD promotes total access, full participation and equal opportunity for people with disabilities of all ages in all aspects of life. It seeks to accomplish this mission through a multi-faceted approach that includes systemic change, education and training, advocacy and direct services.

### **About New York City MOPD**

Operating since 1973, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) is the liaison between New York City government and the disability community. In partnership with all City offices and agencies, MOPD consistently ensures that the rights and concerns of the disability community are included in all City initiatives and that City programs and policies address the needs of people with disabilities. Through its work and advocacy, MOPD has steadily improved services and programs for the over 920,000 New Yorkers who self-identify as people who are living with a disability as well as the approximately six million annual visitors to the city who have disabilities in all facets of life including transportation, employment, healthcare, housing, education, access to City services, and financial empowerment. Working to make New York the most accessible city in the world, the office regularly engages in advocacy and policymaking at the local, state, national, and international levels to make certain that accessibility and full inclusion are key priorities for all public and private stakeholders alike.

## **About AT&T Communications**

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