

Reno Smarter Cities Challenge – Team Recommendations and Overview – February 2013

Introduction

In 2012, IBM selected the City of Reno, Nevada, USA as one (1) of 33 cities to receive a Smarter Cities Challenge grant as part of IBM's citizenship efforts to build a Smarter Planet. Robert Cashell, Sr., Mayor of Reno, and his senior leadership team "...asked IBM to help craft a data-driven strategy for economic development as the City looks to diversify its economy. By applying advanced analytics and using open data, the City aims to improve coordination between policymakers, citizens, higher education institutions, businesses and investors." In response to this challenge, in February 2013, a team of five (5) global IBM experts worked together to provide recommendations for the Region.

The challenge

In the face of economic downturn over the past few years, the City of Reno and its Regional Partners recognized the need for cohesive, forward looking economic development. By applying for a grant from IBM, the City and its Regional Partners wanted an outside-in perspective to review its many challenges.

The City of Reno and its Regional Partners asked IBM to help craft a data-driven Regional strategy for economic development to help diversify the Regional economy. By applying advanced analytics and using open data, they aim to improve Regional coordination between policymakers, citizens, higher education institutions, businesses and investors.

The global IBM interdisciplinary team brought their deep expertise across a diverse set of disciplines to help think about these challenges in new and innovative ways. By bringing an alternative view to analyzing problems and developing solutions, the team worked with the many, different Regional constituents and helped gain required buy in and momentum to address their challenges.

Reno Smarter Cities Team Recommendations:

- **Recommendation #1: Change your mindset. Develop integrated regional economic development strategy with short and long-term horizons**
 - The various jurisdictions should embark on a new beginning by looking at economic development on a regional basis. This requires a change in mindset and people should come together as a group to agree to short and long-term economic objectives for the region.
- **Recommendation #2: Be One Strong Voice. Present one regional economic development face to the outside world.**
 - The Region should designate EDAWN as the regional economic development face to the outside world. EDAWN must broaden its governance model to incorporate votes from the regional jurisdictions (in particular, City of Reno, City of Sparks, and Washoe County).
- **Recommendation #3: Harness the Data. Build regional System of Systems "analytics utility" to support economic.**
 - Using the City of Reno problem definition as a starting point, we assessed the benefits of a regionally-integrated, regionally-operated geospatial analytical system (the "System of Systems").

- **Recommendation #4: Brand the Vision. Not the Slogan For cities and region as a whole**
 - The Region needs to leverage the individual brands of each jurisdiction to build a Regional Brand to represent itself to the outside world. In particular the City of Reno, as the anchor city, needs to also reevaluate and reestablish the City brand.

- **Recommendation #5: Invest in your People. Focus on education and workforce development to build foundation for future growth**
 - The Region needs to have targeted investments in education (K-12) and workforce development by leveraging, aligning, supporting, developing regional assets.