

Smart City Expo Miami Panel to Explore Why Civic Engagement Determines Success

Bringing together to share perspectives on municipal leadership, communications and economic development to turn community input into action

MIAMI, LA, UNITED STATES, October 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As cities invest in artificial intelligence, connected infrastructure, digital services and other technologies designed to improve urban life, one factor remains essential to successful implementation: the people those investments are intended to serve.

That will be the focus of “Why Civic Engagement Determines Success,” a panel discussion taking place Tuesday, October 6, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. during [Smart City](#) Expo Miami 2026 at Miami Dade College’s Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami.

The session comes as Smart City Expo Miami convenes its seventh edition under the theme “Urban Intelligence for a Regenerative Future.”

“

Technology makes us connected and efficient, but successful implementation still comes down to people.”

Greg Chavarria

The two-day conference brings together city officials, architects, urban planners, academics, entrepreneurs and other professionals to exchange real-world experiences around the future of cities. More than 30 countries from every continent are represented, giving attendees an opportunity to learn from approaches being implemented around the world.

The Expo places a strong emphasis on practical learning. Organizers describe an environment



The poster for the Smart City Expo Miami 2026 panel discussion "Why Civic Engagement Determines Success" features a blue and orange color scheme. At the top left, it says "SMART CITY EXPO MIAMI" with the tagline "PEOPLE | IDEAS | SOLUTIONS FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW". To the right, the dates "OCTOBER 5-6, 2026" and location "MIAMI DADE COLLEGE WOLFSON CAMPUS MIAMI, FLORIDA" are listed. On the far right, a blue box contains the text "URBAN INTELLIGENCE FOR A REGENERATIVE FUTURE" and "PEOPLE | PLANET | OPPORTUNITY". The central title "WHY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT DETERMINES SUCCESS" is in large, bold, orange letters, with a subtitle below it: "From smart technology to smart communities — how listening, collaboration and community trust turn ideas into lasting impact." Below the title is a photo of three panelists: Arlene Borenstein, Greg Chavarria, and Amber Cabrera. Their names and titles are listed below their photos. At the bottom, it says "LEARN MORE AT > SmartCityExpoMiami.com" and "A SMARTER MORE CONNECTED SOUTH FLORIDA".

Smart City Panel

where cities openly examine both successful initiatives and lessons from efforts that did not work as planned, allowing other communities to adapt those experiences to their own challenges.

That global conversation provides the backdrop for the October 6 civic engagement panel.

Why Civic Engagement Matters

Technology can provide cities with new tools, data and capabilities. But implementing those solutions requires something technology alone cannot provide: public understanding, trust and participation.

“Why Civic Engagement Determines Success” will explore a fundamental question facing local governments:

How can cities make sure residents, businesses and community stakeholders understand the value of an initiative, have a meaningful opportunity to participate and can see how their input helped shape the outcome?

The conversation complements Smart City Expo Miami’s broader exploration of civic intelligence, including data-driven governance, participatory platforms and approaches that incorporate people into urban decision-making.

The 30-minute discussion will bring together three South Florida professionals representing municipal leadership, communications and economic development.

[Greg Chavarria](#) | Vice President, [KEITH](#) | Moderator

Greg Chavarria, Vice President at KEITH, will moderate the discussion and bring more than 27 years of experience across engineering, technology and municipal government.

Chavarria has served as a city administrator for two South Florida municipalities and has held technology leadership roles across multiple government agencies. His experience includes infrastructure, digital transformation, public-private partnerships, smart city technology and the implementation of large-scale public-sector initiatives.

Chavarria will focus on civic engagement from the municipal leadership and implementation perspective, including why community engagement should begin early enough to influence an initiative rather than simply communicate a decision after it has been made.

“Technology can make a city more connected and efficient, but successful implementation still comes down to people,” said Chavarria. “When residents understand the challenge, have an opportunity to participate and can see how their input influenced the process, cities create a stronger foundation for moving initiatives forward.”

Arlene Borenstein | Communications Director, Town of Bay Harbor Islands

Arlene Borenstein, Communications Director for the Town of Bay Harbor Islands, will bring the municipal communications perspective to the conversation. Borenstein will discuss the importance of translating complex projects, technologies and public initiatives into information residents can easily understand.

The conversation will explore how cities can move beyond one-way communication by providing opportunities for residents to ask questions, provide feedback and stay informed as an initiative moves from concept to implementation.

Her perspective will also address an increasingly important challenge for local governments: reaching residents through multiple channels rather than expecting the community to come to government.

Amber Cabrera | Economic Development Program Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale
Amber Cabrera, Economic Development Program Manager for the City of Fort Lauderdale, will bring an economic development perspective to the discussion, including the importance of engaging businesses, community organizations and other stakeholders when cities pursue new investments and initiatives. Cabrera will explore how cities can identify community champions, understand the needs of different stakeholder groups and create opportunities for residents and businesses to participate earlier in the process.

The discussion will examine the difference between asking stakeholders to support an already-developed plan and providing them with a meaningful opportunity to help shape the solution.

From Smart Technology to Smart Communities

Smart City Expo Miami's 2026 theme reflects an expanding definition of what makes a city "smart." While artificial intelligence, digital twins and connected infrastructure remain important parts of that conversation, the Expo is also examining how local knowledge, governance, design and human creativity can contribute to better urban outcomes.

The Expo features six specialized tracks covering topics including civic intelligence, mobility and sporting events, financial districts, neuro-urbanism, coastal regeneration and regenerative cities. Its Civic Intelligence track specifically addresses data-driven governance and participatory approaches to urban decision-making.

The civic engagement panel will bring that conversation to the local level by examining how people become active participants in change.

Attend "Why Civic Engagement Determines Success"

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Smart City Expo Miami 2026

Miami Dade College – Wolfson Campus

Downtown Miami, Florida

For conference information, programming and registration, visit:

<https://SmartCityExpoMiami.com/>

About Smart City Expo Miami

Smart City Expo Miami is presented by Smart Cities Americas as a platform for urban innovation, resilience and regeneration. The conference brings together decision-makers, practitioners and innovators to exchange practical ideas and real-world experiences that can be adapted by communities across the Americas and beyond.

The 2026 edition is designed as an interactive learning environment where attendees can participate in presentations, ask questions and connect directly with professionals working on urban challenges around the world. More than 30 countries from every continent are represented at this year's event.

About KEITH

KEITH is a multidisciplinary firm serving public- and private-sector clients throughout Florida. The firm provides engineering, planning, surveying and mapping, subsurface utility engineering, landscape architecture, construction management and related professional services.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.KEITHteam.com/>

Greg Chavarria

KEITH

+1 3052992038

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/947478145>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.