Cities. They’re magnets for jobs. Education. Culture. Community. Today, we’re in the midst of an urban renaissance: Increasing numbers of people are moving to cities to improve their quality of life. A trend that’s projected to continue: More than 65 percent of us will live in cities by the year 2050.¹ This migration isn’t limited to bustling metropolises. Smaller cities and municipalities also serve as hubs for higher education and innovation in healthcare, science, and energy—the engines of new ideas and businesses that can spur breakthroughs and economic growth.

The march toward urbanization translates into new opportunities: Denser populations that can enable more efficient service delivery. Growing populations that can attract more entrepreneurs, who, in turn, generate more economic opportunity—and that can attract more global investments, create more jobs, and increase the tax base. Aging populations—and improvements in policing—that can make cities increasingly safer.

Not surprisingly, urbanization also ushers in a new wave of challenges. Antiquated infrastructure. Public health and safety hazards. Economic instability. As a city leader, you’re tasked with addressing emerging demands and even greater citizen expectations—within constrained budgets and while working across siloed agencies.

Microsoft CityNext for Smaller Cities and Municipalities can help you unlock the most important resource of any city—people. How? By delivering innovative, digital citizen-centric services that can help create healthier, safer, and more sustainable communities. Smarter technologies in cloud, mobility, and analytics—the heart of Microsoft CityNext—can offer insights and new approaches to help improve efficiencies and reduce costs. Empowering public services, businesses, and citizens to work collaboratively, Microsoft CityNext can provide a springboard for city innovation and economic prosperity.
Shorten the path to services.

Many municipalities already provide common services through web-based tools. People can set up and manage utilities. Discover and apply for social services online. Securely access health records. Still, many city services are delivered through aging systems, time-consuming and manual processes, or by city workers directly—particularly in health and public safety—often meeting just one citizen’s needs at a time.

Flexible cloud platform technologies now give municipal leaders like you unprecedented choice to improve how your city delivers services—potentially reducing costly inefficiencies. Facilitate city worker self-service, automating routine tasks like downloading software, apps, security policies, and maintenance upgrades to city workers’ desktops and devices. So you can free IT specialists to focus on city business priorities. Share city news, public health, safety, and policy change notices, real-time traffic and weather alerts, and more through citizen portals—all accessible through mobile apps. Creating a more direct channel to engage, communicate with, and deliver services to citizens.

Adopt a cloud platform approach, and your city has the potential to deliver essential services more efficiently, reduce capital expenses, and cut operational costs. And as your city grows, your cloud platform can scale easily to accommodate it.

A cloud of trust.

To realize the benefits of the cloud, you must be willing to entrust your cloud provider with one of your most valuable assets—your data. Microsoft makes security and privacy a priority at every step, from code development through incident response.

Security

A robust set of security technologies and practices helps ensure that Azure infrastructure is resilient to attack, safeguards user access to the Azure environment, and helps keep your data safe.

Privacy

You own and control your own data. Because the customer data you host on Azure belongs to you, you have control over where it is stored and how it is securely accessed and deleted.

Transparency

Through clearly stated, straightforward, and readily available policies and procedures, you’ll know how Microsoft helps secure your customer data, who can access it, and under what circumstances. You can even review the third-party audits and certifications that confirm Microsoft has met the standards it’s set.

Compliance

Azure meets a broad set of international and industry-specific compliance standards. Rigorous third-party audits verify Azure’s adherence to the strict security controls these standards mandate.
Keep your options open.

With Microsoft CityNext solutions, you gain flexibility to adopt cloud technologies on your terms. Whatever approach fits your city plans—on-premises, in private, public, or service provider clouds, or a combination—your IT team can spend less time managing infrastructure and more time focusing on current and future city business initiatives.

For many smaller cities, integrating on-premises IT with the cloud—and leveraging centrally managed, cloud-based resources—is a strategy that preserves investments while limiting budget impact.

Keep the technology investments you’ve already made, enabling your IT team to automate processes and configuration across platforms and environments—putting your organization's business needs ahead of any particular technology or vendor.

Deliver efficient, scalable, and security-enhanced real-time services to staff—within your budget. With public or hybrid cloud solutions, you can have the flexibility to pay only for what you use. You can evaluate and implement new solutions quickly, with minimal deployment cost and risk.

Microsoft cloud platform solutions can help you reduce datacenter complexity and take advantage of virtually limitless storage and processing capacity—while meeting security and compliance requirements.

Decrease the management burden of anticipating and building-out excess capacity IT infrastructure. Greater resource agility translates into less management and deployment time, and lower long-term costs.

Help reduce operational costs through monitoring, management, and automation, so you can reallocate a greater percentage of IT budget to strategic business initiatives, like Meaningful Use, ICD-10, and HIPAA 5010.

Improve IT efficiency—and by extension, staff mobility—by implementing a single, cloud-based, security-enhanced management infrastructure for all your clinicians’ and public safety personnel’s devices, including desktop PCs, Windows tablets, Windows Phone, Android smartphones, iPads, and iPhones.² ³

Migrate open source software workloads, providing native Linux capabilities while taking advantage of the scale, choice, reduced cost, and improved management capability of a cloud-based infrastructure.
Put the cloud in city workers’ hands.

Many of the services your city provides—especially in public health, safety, emergency medical, fire, and police departments—are delivered by mobile staff. Increasingly, field workers rely on a combination of city-managed and personal devices to communicate, share data, and perform critical duties.²³

With the Microsoft cloud platform, you can extend cloud capabilities to desktops and devices, so city staff can access and share data from the office or the field²³—managed by the same security policies that help protect systems and data behind the firewall. And you can manage devices efficiently to fit your resources and policies, either completely from the cloud or, for example, connected to a Microsoft System Center infrastructure.

Remain vigilant.

Much like larger urban areas, smaller cities and municipalities face a range of security challenges. Data privacy and protection. IT and cyber security. Human and environmental physical threats. You have to maintain readiness, and employ the latest sustainable solutions and technologies to quickly mitigate risks and protect citizen data—at nearly fail-proof levels. Scalable cloud technologies can address varying needs, regardless of city size or data volume.

Microsoft cloud platform solutions are built on Microsoft datacenters. Compliant with HIPAA, FISMA, UK G-Cloud, EU Model Clauses, ISO (including ISO/IEC 27018), and other key standards for information security, Microsoft solutions can help you **enable security, data privacy, data sovereignty, compliance and risk management, and identity and access control.**

- **Increase resilience against cyber threats.** Microsoft’s dynamic security framework helps to protect sensitive systems and information, detects attacks of advanced adversaries, and can respond successfully to combat them.

- **Support for security-enhanced authentication and citizen identity management,** for example, enables you to **offer citizens reliable services and access to information**—like tax and health data—from their laptops, tablets, and mobile devices²³.

- **Convenient, cost-effective, offsite cloud storage** can help you **better prepare for and protect your mission-critical information from a wide range of failure scenarios** like malware and human error, as well as catastrophic natural disasters like earthquakes, wildfires, floods, and tornadoes.

- **Build and deploy emergency and event-management solutions** hosted in the cloud to help first responders and humanitarian aid workers perform equally effectively onsite—especially in unfamiliar surroundings or with a damaged or inaccessible infrastructure²³.
Responsibility as a platform.

Even in a healthy economy, citizens expect city leaders to wisely manage how they spend taxpayers' dollars. Cloud technologies can help you maintain fiscal responsibility by reducing operational costs through monitoring, management, and automation—which can enable you to reallocate a greater percentage of IT budget to strategic city initiatives.

While smaller cities often promote local-first initiatives, responsibility has global implications. Cities today consume about two-thirds of the world’s energy, and contribute the largest share of the world’s e-waste—a mountain that grew globally by 41.8 metric tons in 2014. Yet, innovative solutions abound. For example, through application virtualization, you can optimize power usage and lower energy costs when you retire or recycle unused equipment.

Cloud helps to improve quality of life

The Microsoft cloud and the Internet of Things can help cities like yours optimize traffic flow, monitor power consumption, and lower energy costs. Take the Netherlands city of Breda, where the water quality translates into citizens' quality of life. Located at the confluence of the Mark and Aa rivers, with its city center surrounded by a canal, Breda's water creates a wonderful living environment for citizens, but comes with challenges—like increasingly heavier rains (attributed to climate change) that can cause flooding.

The city's scalable, comprehensive Smart Data Management Waterakkers project—built on the Microsoft Azure cloud platform—analyzes and visualizes massive data collected by sensors and pumps around the city in real time. Even predicting pump failure. Microsoft Power BI analytics help transform the data into information citizens can use, including how much energy they consume. Citizens participate by sending water observations through social media, enabling staff to assess solution value. Optimize asset management. Lower energy and maintenance costs. And proactively prevent flooding.

Watch the video.

What’s next?

The Microsoft cloud platform provides a scalable, cost-effective solution with the flexibility to adopt cloud technologies on your terms—so you can maximize existing IT investments and maintain fiscal responsibility, while delivering essential city services more efficiently.

Microsoft CityNext can create a bridge that spans where your city is today and where you want to take it tomorrow. Through a broad portfolio of familiar, security-enhanced software, next-generation devices, and cloud services, Microsoft and its vast, global network of deeply experienced Microsoft Partners are uniquely equipped to enable a people-first approach to city innovations. Through Microsoft CityNext, we’re helping cities like yours to build on existing investments and to incorporate new innovations at their own pace—all to help increase efficiencies, reduce costs, and foster a more prosperous life for all.

Realize what’s next for your city.

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2 An appropriate device, Internet connection, and supported browser and/or carrier network connectivity are required. Data charges may apply.
3 Microsoft solutions may not support all devices at the same level of features, functions, capabilities, and security.