



CityTech Collaborative

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2021

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CITY TECH LAUNCHES SOLUTION PILOT TO SUPPORT REOPENING OF CHICAGO'S NAVY PIER

*Navy Pier, NTT, SDI Presence, SOM, and Intel Integrate Technology and Design
to Enhance Safety and Visitor Experience*

COVID-19 vaccinations, declining infection rates, and warmer weather are raising hopes for a swift and safe return to public life. Even as excitement builds for post-COVID reopenings, the threats of viral variants and delayed immunity calls for continued vigilance and innovation to keep businesses running smoothly and residents safe.

For complex public and semi-public spaces, reopening poses unique challenges and elevated expectations. Restaurants, museums, conference venues, and tourist attractions, for example, must provide enjoyable experiences without compromising visitor safety. Technology-enabled design, monitoring and management of our favorite shared spaces can facilitate safe returns, improve visitor experiences, and build long-term resilience to future disruptions.

City Tech Collaborative has partnered with NTT, SDI Presence, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Intel, and Chicago's Navy Pier to develop new capacity and visitor management solutions for shared urban spaces. Combining high-tech with existing systems and a data-driven approach, the team seeks to increase the accuracy of attendance counts, institute on-site wayfinding guidance, implement easy-to-navigate design changes, and share real-time capacity and trip planning information with guests prior to their arrival and during their visit.

"Navy Pier represents the full range of opportunities and challenges facing shared spaces as we emerge from COVID hibernation," said Brenna Berman, CEO of City Tech Collaborative. "As a self-contained urban entertainment district and popular nonprofit cultural destination, Navy Pier can become a model for post-COVID space management...while offering a much-needed return to fun!"

Prior to COVID, Navy Pier welcomed nearly 9 million people annually, making it one of the Midwest's most visited nonprofit institutions. Combining multiple convention spaces, attractions, restaurants, shopping, and a hotel, Navy Pier boasts 50 acres of multi-use space, more than 250 free public programs, and nearly 70 independent businesses and nonprofits for guests to explore. After closing temporarily in September 2020 amid COVID-19 precautions, the Pier is preparing to reopen this spring.

"We look forward to working with City Tech and the other leading partners to improve short-term operations while still planning far beyond the immediate needs and challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic," said Mark Thompson, Vice President of Data, Analytics & Strategic Marketing for Navy Pier. "As a popular destination for Chicago residents and visitors from all over the world, we're excited to reopen and add to the many ways Navy Pier focuses on the health, safety and experience of its guests."

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Building on Navy Pier's existing coronavirus precautions, City Tech and partners are looking beyond single locations or points in time to account for movement across multiple spaces prior to and during a guest's visit. Global technology and business solutions provider NTT will assess and analyze the existing data and technologies at Navy Pier as well as integrate new data and analytics.

"This project is a great example of how the magnitude of data available and advanced analytics can help businesses understand a space as complex as Navy Pier," said Bill Bayer, Vice President of the NTT SMART World team. "We are thrilled to be a part of this collaboration and help businesses and residents reopen safely."

Design firm Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) will lead the development of physical design solutions based on analytics and modeling. Changes to be investigated include direct visual communication and short-term and flexible reconfigurations to steer people to less densely occupied routes and spaces. Subtle cues that influence people's behavior can also help to manage capacity and density while reinforcing the Pier's commitment to providing a safe, fun experience.

"Navy Pier's diversity of spaces and visitors raises fascinating questions about design, function, and human behavior," said Chris Hall, Urban Strategy Leader of SOM. "Data will help us understand how people interact with their environment, which solutions are best suited for each type of space, and how to help people move between those spaces."

IT consultancy and Managed Services Provider SDI Presence will serve as project manager as well as integrate the technology needed to implement those physical and operational changes. According to Peter Sotos, SDI Presence's Delivery Executive, "SDI is delivering end-to-end planning and IT services to help our facilities clients make a thoughtful transition to return to work and play. The Navy Pier pilot is an innovative and scalable step forward and lays the foundation for a safer and more interactive visitor experience."

Sharing information on Navy Pier's current capacity with guests before arrival can empower them to better plan their visits. In addition to integrating technology and implementing physical changes, the collaboration is developing a set of high-level requirements for trip planning. By incorporating and sharing transparent capacity data, these requirements will provide the framework needed to make real-time changes and actively communicate with visitors prior to their arrival.

Leveraging their expertise in hardware and system architecture and comprehensive partner ecosystem, Intel will enable advanced analytics at Navy Pier. Intel's support is critical to collect, analyze, and model data at scale and inform the tools developed by the collaboration.

Although COVID-19 has raised the stakes for managing shared spaces amid cities' reopenings, the importance of proactive capacity management predates the coronavirus and is certain to outlive it. Capacity management and trip-planning tools can help answer these questions long after the immediate health concerns dissipate.

To learn more about this collaboration, visit www.CityTech.org/Capacity-Management.

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About City Tech Collaborative

City Tech Collaborative (City Tech) is an urban solutions accelerator that tackles problems too big for any single sector or organization to solve alone. City Tech's work uses IoT sensing networks, advanced analytics, and urban design to create scalable, market ready solutions. Current initiatives address mobility, healthy cities, connected infrastructure, and emerging growth opportunities. City Tech was born and raised in Chicago, and every city is a potential partner. Visit www.CityTech.org for more information and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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