

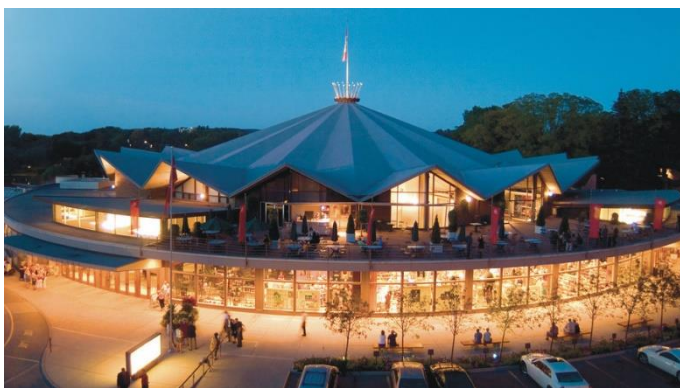


Stratford, Ont.

Frequently viewed as a centre for the performing artsⁱ, Stratford is not the first place that comes to mind when looking for innovative Canadian smart cities. But the small Ontario municipality boasts multiple “Top 7 Intelligent Communities of the Year” placings (an award handed out by the Intelligent Community Forum)ⁱⁱ, global recognition as a smart city, and has been frequently been ahead of the curve when it comes to technology and broadband.ⁱⁱⁱ

What has garnered the most attention for Stratford from forums and fellow smart cities is largely the free Wi-Fi connectivity.^{iv} The speeds are more than acceptable and the connection is also relatively secure, thanks to detailed privacy work by the companies running the network.

The easily accessible fiber has “enhanced municipal services” and the lives of Stratford residents, making the “dual-purpose network” a huge success.^v



This grid, provided by Rhyzone Networks, was pushed into deployment when the 2010 Green Energy and Green Economy Act was passed by the Province.^{vi}

Stratford had already been toying with the idea of universal Wi-Fi, and this was an opportunity to meet conservation standards while also bettering city services.^{vii}

The innovative “smart meters” that were introduced in 2010 are now fully integrated into buildings and supported by the network.^{viii} They continuously send usage data from homes to a hub that is checked hourly by the utility provider, Festival Hydro.^{ix}

The main perks of the constant monitoring are that billing specifics can be tracked, and schedules can be adjusted along with off-peak hours.^x This smart energy conservation tool, paired with internet equality, makes Stratford’s dual-purpose network one of the economically beneficial any city has to offer.^{xi}



Recently, Stratford has been following the model of UK smart cities and has begun testing driverless cars.^{xii} Using the Wi-Fi set in place, the city envisions the traffic lights and cars connected to the

grid, “communicating” with one another.^{xiii} This would mean crosswalks notifying autonomous vehicles when pedestrians are crossing and yellow lights telling them to begin braking.^{xiv}

Stratford may not be as noticeable as Barcelona or as photogenic as Stockholm, but Ontario’s smart city punches well above its weight, ranking high as an Intelligent Community. Providing a free Wi-Fi network that performs well is no small feat, and the energy conservation projects are notable as well. The city’s digital equality and innovations make it a progressive community, and Stratford is an ideal role model for aspiring smart cities.



(written by Cameron Squance)

ⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stratford,_Ontario#Music

ⁱⁱ <http://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/dobusiness/intelligentcommunity.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.investinontario.com/spotlights/smart-city-pilots-smarter-cars>

^{iv} www.investontario.com

^v https://www.zebra.com/content/dam/msi-new/assets/web/Business/_Documents/Case%20studies/_Static%20files/Stratford%20CS%20FINAL.pdf

^{vi} www.zebra.com

^{vii} www.zebra.com

^{viii} www.zebra.com

^{ix} www.zebra.com

^x www.zebra.com

^{xi} www.zebra.com

^{xii} <http://www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/dobusiness/intelligentcommunity.asp>

^{xiii} <http://www.investinontario.com/spotlights/smart-city-pilots-smarter-cars>

^{xiv} www.thestar.com