Jeff:	Hello and welcome to this edition of Community and University. I'm your host, Jeff Franklin, a research assistant at Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic development, specifically in the Regional Economic Innovation department. today I'm joined by Dr. John Monberg of the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures as well as the Experience Architecture program at Michigan State. How are you today, Dr Monberg?
Dr. Monberg:	I'm doing well, the classic Michigan Summer Day and a nice time to kind of reflect and think about the big picture and talk to interesting people.
Jeff:	So you're one of our co learning authors for the 2019 project year. From my understanding, your project revolves around getting the perspective of the humanities more involved with the more technical field of community and economic development, particularly with smart cities. Is this accurate?
Dr. Monberg:	That is accurate, yes.
Jeff:	Can you talk a little bit about what smart cities are and why humanitarian framework is so vital to their development?
Dr. Monberg:	So smart city is kind of a big picture narrative for lots of developments in sensors, algorithms, all kinds of information, technology developments. And we've moved from, uh, a kind of a big picture story about smart city technologies as sort of a, almost a science fiction capability. And now the technologies are proven enough that they're moving out of laboratories and into the world very quickly. And there are all kinds of issues from traffic and safety and environmental conditions and economic development that can be improved by the use of smart city technologies. But those improvements will only happen if we really understand community stake holders values the visions they have for the future, what kind of society they'd like to create. And, and starting from that point of view to drive the technology developments.
Jeff:	What were some of the surprises you found while you were working on this co learning plan?
Dr. Monberg:	The biggest surprise was how important the intellectual approaches from the humanities are to solving what's really important about smart city initiatives. You can have specialized experts in engineers who can develop algorithms and sensors and improve those on narrow technical features. But for cities really to thrive in the future, the three important things I've really discovered from this project is one, how do you develop a common vision for the future and cross the traditional silos of traffic departments and economic development and environmental impacts, um, and have those people work together. And that becomes even more important when you have different community stakeholders that have very different visions of what kinds of jobs they would like to have, what kind of neighborhoods they'd like to have, the kind of family

structure they have. And, coordinating those two things into a shared vision is important. A second thing I've discovered is that there are many techniques that corporations have used to do user research to understand how their customers think about the world and what they value. And cities had been very ambitious lately about using some of those technologies so that they compliment traditional community engagement techniques that cities have done. And the third thing that is a little bit surprising, but how important ethical issues are ethical issues around things like data privacy, issues of equity, accountability. So having a common vision, understanding community engagement and understanding the ethical issues are things that academic in the humanities are very good at and have developed over a long time period sophisticated ways of moving forward in those three areas. And unfortunately, those academic experts have been in their own kind of ivory tower silo. And so one of my central missions is to take that sophisticated academic knowledge and work with a lot of community stakeholders and city managers to understand how they make decisions and what kind of information would be usable for them as they try to make their cities more, just more sustainable, more economically creative and vibrant.

Jeff: So what sort of obstacles constant or come up often when you're trying to develop these smart cities, especially with the humanitarian framework?

Dr. Monberg: There are a couple issues. One that I've noted already is that cities are organized around traditional silos. So traffic engineers look at the world from the perspective of a traffic engineer. Economic development. People use the traditional tools of economic development. Zoning works in a different way. And in crossing those very strong differences is definitely a challenge. Another huge challenge is that now there are hundreds of cities using thousands of smart city projects doing all kinds of creative and innovative things and that there's sort of a deluge of information that's very difficult to keep track of. And I've been trying to kind of coordinate in cluster that knowledge so that I could present it in a way that city managers can find and understand and make use of those techniques and solving the problems that they face.

Jeff: Speaking of presenting, what will your presentation at this year's summit cover?

Dr. Monberg: It will cover the resource that I've just mentioned, right. I'll create a kind of general roadmap for how smart city technologies are being implemented in Michigan and then talk through a number of techniques that city managers can use to create a shared vision of the future. Use user research to understand community engagement and wrestle with some of those ethical issues. One of the resources I will have will be contacts of cities in Michigan doing smart city projects. A second resource will be case studies of cities that have been nationally recognized as leadership in a smart city area. And the third area will be a set of national reports that lay out the broad terrain. So these resources won't be able to give a person an in depth understanding of a smart city project, but they'll be a great starting point to kind of understand broadly what's going

on with smart city technologies and then how to move forward and some resources to move forward given that understanding.

Jeff: So you keep mentioning some of these smart city technologies and some that might be coming to Michigan, specifically. Will your presentation cover any of the specific technologies that we, you might start to see in our communities? Can you talk a little bit about what some examples of those might be?

Dr. Monberg: So yes, I will be talking about some of those. And so some of these include things like smart lighting, in some ways can reduce the energy bills that cities face by using sensors to use lighting more efficiently. But if you're going to put in those sensors, you can also move to 5g. You can also put in video cameras, you can do many things, and so lighting turns into not just providing light in a neighborhood, but a way of thinking about safety, thinking about vibrant street life, and as a data infrastructure. I'll be talking about the Grand Rapids 311 program that creates kind of an open portal to crossing the silos that a citizen traditionally faces and trying to figure out how to negotiate what can be a complex city. I'll be talking about the 311 program in Grand Rapids. So citizens of a community often face a bewildering array of choices when they are trying to solve a problem. And these kinds of techniques can create a useful roadmap for citizens to engage with the community. I might talk about some smaller issues like a program in Ann Arbor that uses iPhones to map roads to understand how potholes affect different neighborhoods. And using a technology as simple as an iPhone can cut the expense of doing that mapping by 80% or more. So we're quickly moving from a world where smart city is a kind of an abstract science fiction label into a world where there are dozens of little initiatives that can definitely make a city safer, more creative, more vibrant, more inclusive, and we need to have a capacity so city managers can make good decisions along those lines.

Jeff: That sounds awesome. But I think where you sold me was on where you said potholes might get better. You know how big of a problem that is in Michigan. So this is clearly something that really impacts communities directly and individual members of communities. How can community members get involved if they can do so?

Dr. Monberg: One thing is by reaching out to me and I've been interviewing lots of people face to face and by email and over time, I get a much better sense of what's important to city managers and community members and I've been working on both a blog and a website to synthesize that kind of information. And so following me on Twitter, giving me feedback on the report, following up on email is something that can have a long-term benefit.

Jeff: Would you like to give people your contact information now over the pod?

Dr. Monberg: So my email is jmonberg@msu.edu. My Twitter is @jomonberg, and the website is Smart City Citizens.

Jeff: So how will your project continue after this year's Innovate Michigan Summit?

Dr. Monberg: We've seen in the Midwest how important that universities can act as a catalyst. Universities can bring lots of different kinds of expertise together and lots of people with different kinds of visions of the future together and Midwestern cities thrive when universities have the capacity to bring those very different kinds of people, visions and techniques together. And so I've been working over the last three years and I'll continue to work over the next two to three years, at least, in creating the capacity for kind of medium sized cities in the Midwest to make use of university expertise as a catalyst for making good decisions about smart city projects.

Jeff: This all sounds incredible. I want to thank you for, for coming into the CCED today. Dr. Monberg came in today to help us promote the Innovate Michigan Summit that'll be happening Thursday, August 29th. If you would like to attend, you can find more information on Reicenter.org that is reicenter.org under the events tab, be sure to register. There is a reception at the end. There's box lunch during during the summit, and a lot of really cool presenters, including Dr. Monberg here. So please think about coming and we hope to see you there. Thanks for listening.