

City-Business Talk: Smart Parking Solutions

Lessons from the Shimla-Cocoparks collaboration

The first session of a new IURC City-Business Talk series pairing a city with a solution provider on a concrete urban challenge. This edition featured Shimla Municipal Corporation and Cocoparks, with participation from Leh, Jabalpur and other cities.

THE CHALLENGE – SHIMLA

- 1 Hill city, state capital of Himachal Pradesh.
- 2 Heavy tourism load: 40,000+ tourists on peak summer days.
- 3 Narrow roads, limited developable land.
- 4 Traditional manual parking — inefficient, opaque, long waits at entry points.
- 5 Result: congestion, idling emissions, degraded experience.

THE SOLUTION – COCOPARKS

- 1 French company, introduced to Shimla via the Global Covenant of Mayors Business Matchmaking initiative.
- 2 Not a sensor vendor — an AI-based curb and parking orchestration platform.
- 3 Connects existing parking infrastructure (sensors, cameras, payment, displays, apps) into one system.
- 4 Works with local installation and maintenance partners in each deployment.

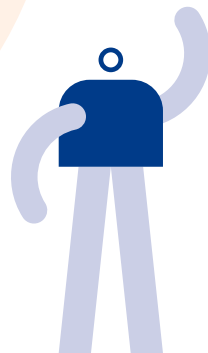
Pre-implementation factors to have in mind

The Cocoparks platform is modular and scales to different city sizes. One of the key condition for a successful implementation is being flexible and open to innovation, remember not to push the technology onto an unpaved way, replicability is about context.

Some “musts” in implementation:

- 1) **Useful:** solve a clear day-today issue
- 2) **Scalable:** start small, but plan big (integrate scalation form the beginning)
- 3) **Capitalize:** Use existing infraetsructure, low-power-sensors
- 4) **Local:** combine the international aspect with local businesses (installation, maintenance, etc.)

Cocoparks visits Shimla to install the parking orchestrati on screen



The initiative's deployment

The how, what and when

When?

The Partnership was formed in 2023 through the cGCoM Business Matchmaking. In May 2025, after small-scale pilots, the Smart parking was inaugurated.

What?

The Smart parking system included: sensors for real-time detection, Smart parking AI powered cameras installed in lampposts/buildings, LED screen display before entering Shimla to show availability, and a mobile app for Reservations, payments, life updates, etc.

How?

An IoT-based Smart parking architecture was constructed to manage the data produced, feed it into a central platform and serve the information back to citizens. The information collected through sensors and cameras is sent to the Cocoparks cloud and then displayed in the web and display screens.

"Human connection is actually what allows a project to absorb difficulties and continue moving forward. And it's part of the infrastructure of the project as well." – Raphael Jatteau, Cocoparks CEO

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Include key local stakeholder: including key decision makers from the city has been prove essential to a correct and easy implementation

4

Plan for funding continuity: identify follow-on funding (municipal budget, parking revenue) before the pilot ends to avoid funding scarcity.

3

Start small: test previous pilots before a city-wide rollout, this proves the model and surfaces operational issues at small scale.

2

Coordinate from the beginning: the implementation covers traffic, parking and tourism authorities. Joint ownership from the outset prevents stalling.

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Citizen engagement is as critical as the methodology; plan a parallel awareness and training programme from day one. A smart parking system only delivers value if drivers use the app.

5 Key lessons learnt

Main benefits

- **Reduced congestion in busy areas at city entry points**
 - Less time wasted searching, better traffic flow
- **Lowered emissions from idling vehicles searching for parking**
 - 30% emissions are produced while searching for parking
- **Improved experience for citizens and tourists**
 - Better environmental condition reducing sound and air pollution
- **Support for tourism management**
 - Stronger tourist management during peak season

Way forward

- **Expand smart parking to more areas**
- **Capitalize on produced data for other uses**
- **Integrate with overall urban mobility system**
- **Move towards a smarter and more sustainable Shimla**