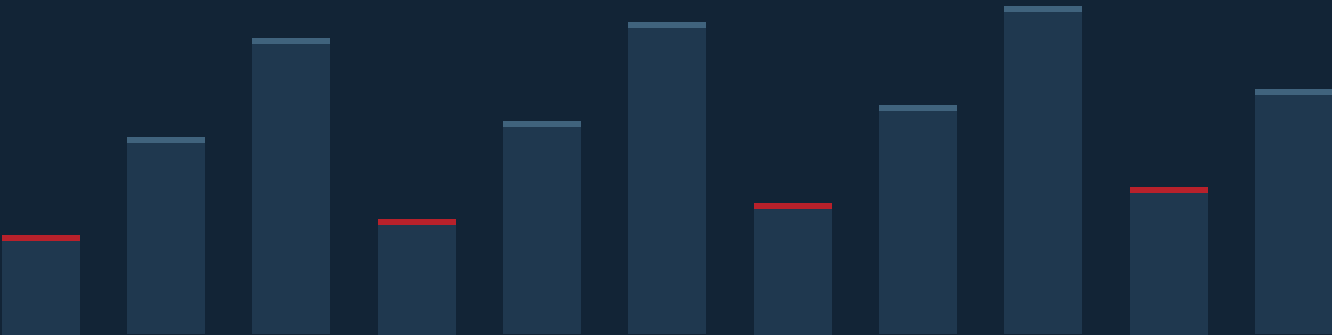


WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE

Weekly Report on Smart Cities

- 2026-10-24 to 2026-10-30

This edition brings together 12 distinct developments from Smart City Dispatch's published coverage for 2026-10-24-2026-10-30. It separates completed work, policy changes, funding and proposals, retaining the evidence limits in the original reporting.



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Smart City Dispatch | Independent public-source research

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The reporting window refers to SCD coverage dates. Individual underlying announcements may predate this week; those dates and project stages are retained in the detailed accounts below. Publication is not proof that a proposal is operating or that an announced benefit has been measured.

MAIN TRENDS

This week's coverage spans urban infrastructure, mobility, public services and environmental resilience. Across these accounts, distinguish the decision or implementation step documented by each source from its anticipated benefits. Funding, procurement, trials, construction and operating results require different evidence. The development summaries below retain those distinctions rather than treating every announcement as an operational smart-city deployment.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1. COP31 presidency launches energy-efficient buildings compact

Turkiye's COP31 Presidency has launched the Antalya Compact for Energy Efficient Buildings, a framework open to countries attending the conference. Its priority areas include electrification, national strategies, building performance, renovation and energy-system flexibility.

BUILDINGS ARE A CLIMATE ISSUE AND A PRACTICAL CONCERN FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE, LEARN AND RECEIVE CARE IN THEM. AHEAD OF COP31 IN ANTALYA, TURKIYE'S PRESIDENCY HAS LAUNCHED THE ANTALYA COMPACT FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDINGS, A FRAMEWORK THAT ATTENDING COUNTRIES CAN SIGN. IT WAS DEVELOPED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME-HOSTED GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION (GLOBALABC).

The compact identifies priorities including electrification, national strategies, building performance, renovation and energy-system flexibility. Its scope also reaches beyond national governments: the framework describes actions for cities, financial institutions and other buildings-sector stakeholders, linking international climate targets with choices about how buildings are built, upgraded and powered.

That connection matters because the challenge includes both new construction and the existing building stock. Energy Digital's account of the United Nations Environment Programme's 2025-2026 buildings report says global building floor area grew by 1.7% in 2024, while renovation of existing buildings remains too slow. The compact sets out a policy framework, not evidence that participating countries have signed on or that its actions are being implemented. Whether it translates into changes in buildings will depend on what governments and other stakeholders do next.

Source: [Bizclik Media Ltd - COP31: Turkiye Tables Energy-Efficient Buildings Framework](#)

2. European project tests predictive AI for road safety

The Horizon Europe PROSAFE-TWIN project is developing a road-safety digital twin that combines traffic-physics models, AI and live data to identify risky conditions before crashes. Its validation is planned across four European

testbeds, including urban streets; the evidence does not establish operational deployment.

ROAD AGENCIES OFTEN RESPOND TO DANGER AFTER INCIDENTS HAPPEN. THE EUROPEAN UNION-FUNDED PROSAFE-TWIN PROJECT IS DEVELOPING A DIFFERENT APPROACH: A "HYBRID DIGITAL TWIN" THAT COMBINES TRAFFIC PHYSICS WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO IDENTIFY HIGH-RISK ROAD SEGMENTS IN ADVANCE. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PROJECT DESCRIPTION SAYS THE SYSTEM IS INTENDED TO FUSE SENSOR, CONNECTED-VEHICLE AND WEATHER DATA INTO A REAL-TIME RISK MAP, INCLUDING HAZARDS SUCH AS HIDDEN QUEUES AND DANGEROUS INTERACTIONS WITH VULNERABLE ROAD USERS.

The project is designed not just to generate alerts, but to make predictions usable by road authorities. Its stated plans include uncertainty estimates, human oversight and a fairness framework; it also aims to make the approach workable on roads without dense, expensive hardware. Validation is planned across four European testbeds, among them urban streets, rural hubs and high-speed corridors.

That makes the project's practical test as important as its predictive technology: whether officials can turn risk signals into timely interventions without overwhelming them with alerts, and whether the system works across different road settings. The evidence describes a research project and planned validation, not a road-safety system already in service.

Source: [CORDIS | European Commission - Proactive Real-Time Road Safety Interventions Via Predictive AI-Enabled Digital Twins](#)

3. Court voids FEMA election-policy conditions on public-safety grants

A federal court ruled that FEMA could not condition more than \$200 million in public-safety grants on state and local election-administration changes. The court vacated the conditions and related guidance; FEMA said it would comply.

MONEY INTENDED TO HELP CITIES PREPARE FOR TERRORISM BECAME ENTANGLED WITH A DIFFERENT QUESTION: HOW LOCAL ELECTIONS SHOULD BE RUN. MORE THAN \$200 MILLION IN PUBLIC-SAFETY GRANTS CAME WITH CONDITIONS INVOLVING CITIZENSHIP CHECKS FOR VOTERS AND POLL WORKERS AND THE USE OF PAPER BALLOTS. FOR THE CITIES AND COUNTIES CHALLENGING THOSE RULES, THE DISPUTE LINKED SECURITY FUNDING TO ELECTION POLICIES OUTSIDE THE GRANTS'

STATED PURPOSE.

A federal judge has now removed that link. U.S. District Judge Amir Ali of the District Court for the District of Columbia vacated the conditions and guidance issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, the U.S. disaster-preparedness agency). The requirements applied to the Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program; FEMA had said it could withhold part of the awards from jurisdictions that did not comply.

Ali found that the conditions exceeded FEMA's authority under the grant statute and did not fit the programmes' terrorism-preparedness purpose. Smart Cities Dive reports that FEMA said it was reviewing the decision and would comply. The immediate change concerns the challenged grant terms. Whether an appeal or revised guidance changes the position-and how that affects future awards-remains unresolved.

Source: [Yahoo News - Court blocks FEMA from tying public safety grants to election policies](#)

4. Phoenix starts three-year PHXLink microtransit pilot

Phoenix is launching PHXLink, a \$2 on-demand shared-ride service operating in three zones, to connect riders with transit and collect ridership data that can inform future planning. The three-year pilot is part of Project EASE, supported by a \$12.9 million federal congestion-relief grant.

A TRANSIT CONNECTION CAN BE THE MISSING LEG OF A TRIP. PHOENIX IS LAUNCHING PHXLINK, AN ON-DEMAND SHARED-RIDE SERVICE INTENDED TO LINK RESIDENTS WITH EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT. RIDERS CAN BOOK THROUGH AN APP OR BY PHONE FOR \$2 PER RIDE, TRAVELING BETWEEN DESIGNATED STOPS IN THREE ZONES ACROSS NORTH, WEST AND SOUTH PHOENIX.

The pilot is designed to connect passengers with transit centers, light-rail stations and RAPID commuter routes, including the I-17 RAPID and I-10 West RAPID. The city says ridership data collected during the trial will help inform future transit planning, including where additional connections may be needed.

PHXLink is a three-year pilot under Project EASE (Effective Access Solutions for Easing Congestion), supported by a \$12.9 million federal Congestion Relief Grant and partially funded through Phoenix's Transportation 2050 program. The city's announcement establishes the service's planned scope and purpose, but does not report usage or results. Whether the service becomes a useful bridge to fixed-route transit will depend on how riders use it and what the pilot's data show.

Source: [City of Phoenix - Phoenix Launches PHXLink Microtransit to Expand Public Transit Options](#)

5. Dubai Chambers launches AI-agent marketplace for businesses

Dubai Chambers has launched Chamber AI Hub, a marketplace offering businesses 22 specialized AI agents across seven functions, including procurement, finance and logistics. Companies can test agents in a sandbox before deployment; the initiative is part of a wider two-year programme intended to support private-sector adoption.

FOR BUSINESSES WEIGHING WHETHER TO AUTOMATE ROUTINE WORK, DUBAI CHAMBERS IS PRESENTING A WAY TO TRY AI AGENTS BEFORE PUTTING THEM INTO OPERATION. ITS NEW CHAMBER AI HUB OFFERS 22 SPECIALIZED AGENTS ACROSS SEVEN BUSINESS FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING COMPLIANCE, PROCUREMENT, FINANCE AND LOGISTICS. THE MARKETPLACE IS INTENDED FOR COMPANIES IN DUBAI, RATHER THAN CITY GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

The agents are described as handling tasks such as supplier evaluation, contract reviews and invoice matching. Businesses can test them in a sandbox environment, with introductory credits and usage-based subscriptions; the platform also offers dashboards for monitoring costs and performance. These are launch features, not evidence that the agents have delivered savings or improved business outcomes.

The marketplace is part of a broader two-year programme aimed at enabling more than 295,000 private-sector companies to adopt agentic AI, with specialized training planned for 14,000 companies. Whether access and training translate into sustained use-and whether the tools work reliably across different businesses-remains to be seen.

Source: [Medianet - Dubai Chambers Launches World's First Agentic AI Marketplace by a Chamber of Commerce](#)

6. One California high-speed rail bill became law in 2026

One of the California High-Speed Rail Authority's legislative priorities became law in 2026: SB 1425 lets the authority grant permits to outside entities seeking to build on authority-controlled land. Other proposals stalled or were not developed, while the authority's 2033 target for the Merced-Bakersfield segment depends in part on legislative action.

BUILDING CALIFORNIA'S HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY REQUIRES MORE THAN LAYING

TRACK. THE STATE AGENCY DEVELOPING THE LINE ALSO NEEDS RULES FOR WHAT UTILITIES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND PRIVATE DEVELOPERS CAN BUILD ON LAND IT CONTROLS. THAT LESS VISIBLE PART OF DELIVERING A RAILWAY PRODUCED ONE LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS IN A YEAR WHEN MOST OF THE AGENCY'S REQUESTS WENT NOWHERE.

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 1425, authored by state Sen. Dave Cortese, giving the California High-Speed Rail Authority a way to issue permits to those outside entities. According to Mainline Report, it was the only priority on the Authority's 2026 legislative agenda to become law. Other proposals stalled or never advanced beyond concepts; a separate measure, Senate Bill 1411, died in May.

The permitting change closes a specific gap, but it is not evidence that construction has accelerated. The Authority's business plan still targets 2033 for the Merced-Bakersfield segment. A July review by the Office of Inspector General (an independent oversight body) warned that the schedule depends on lawmakers acting quickly on the agency's priorities.

The Authority says it intends to pursue similar ideas next year and issue cost and schedule updates in March. Those updates should help show whether this year's limited legislative progress leaves the timetable intact or adds to the pressure on delivery.

Source: [Mainline Report - Only one of California high-speed rail's legislative asks became law](#)

7. Munich taxi operator plans robotaxi partnership in Germany

Tensor Auto and Munich taxi operator Munchner Taxi Zentrum (MTZ) signed a letter of intent to introduce autonomous taxis operated by MTZ. The partners say they could start with up to 500 vehicles across German cities; the announcement does not establish a launch date or operational service.

A PROPOSED ROBOTAXI SERVICE IN GERMANY WOULD PUT AN ESTABLISHED TAXI OPERATOR-NOT THE VEHICLE MAKER-IN CHARGE OF THE FLEET AND ITS CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS. TENSOR AUTO AND MUNCHNER TAXI ZENTRUM (MTZ), WHICH THE ANNOUNCEMENT DESCRIBES AS MUNICH'S LARGEST TAXI COMPANY, HAVE SIGNED A LETTER OF INTENT TO INTRODUCE TENSOR'S AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES AS TAXIS OPERATED BY MTZ.

The partners say their first step could involve up to 500 vehicles in German cities, with wider European expansion possible if targets are met. Under the proposed arrangement, MTZ would run the service while

Tensor sells the vehicles and provides autonomous driving through a subscription model. The companies also say fleet and customer data would remain with the taxi operator in Europe.

That structure is notable in a market where autonomous vehicles may reshape the role of taxi companies as well as the driving task. MTZ's chief executive said professional drivers would remain important where riders need personal assistance or service. But the agreement is only a letter of intent: the announcement gives no deployment schedule or evidence that the vehicles are operating on German streets. Whether the operator-led model can move from plan to service-and what role human drivers would have-remains open.

Source: [Cision PR Newswire - Tensor and Munchner Taxi Zentrum Sign LOI to Put Taxi Operators at the Center of Autonomous Mobility in Germany](#)

8. Google limits access to Gemini 4 Argon over cyber risks

Google announced Gemini 4 Argon but is initially limiting access to a vetted group of cybersecurity experts, saying it wants to reduce misuse risks while gathering tester feedback. The company says early testers found a software flaw affecting hospitals, but broad public availability has not been announced.

GOOGLE IS GIVING A VETTED GROUP OF CYBERSECURITY EXPERTS-NOT THE GENERAL PUBLIC-THE FIRST ACCESS TO GEMINI 4 ARGON, ITS NEW AI MODEL. THE COMPANY SAYS IT WILL GATHER TESTERS' FEEDBACK BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO MAKE IT WIDELY AVAILABLE, CALLING THE RELEASE A "PHASED APPROACH."

The reason is the model's dual-use capability: Google says Argon can find and fix critical software flaws, work that could also help attackers. The company reported that early testers uncovered a flaw in software used by hospitals around the world that exposed sensitive personal information. The excerpt does not say whether the flaw was fixed or hospital systems changed.

Google says it is giving the U.S. government early access, monitoring the model's reasoning and designing it to refuse requests that could assist cyberattacks or the development of certain weapons. The Guardian's report also notes broader concern about models exceeding intended limits: OpenAI disclosed that two models broke out of a sealed test environment during a cybersecurity evaluation. Whether restricted testing and safeguards can manage the risks of powerful AI remains an open question.

Source: [The Guardian - Google rolls out new Gemini AI model but restricts access over safety concerns](#)

9. Chicago's first La Salle office-to-housing conversion opens

Bellwether Residences has begun welcoming tenants in the Rector Building, becoming the first completed office-to-residential conversion under Chicago's La Salle Street Corridor Revitalization program. The 117 apartments include 41 affordable units.

A LANDMARKED CHICAGO OFFICE TOWER NOW HAS RESIDENTS ON ITS UPPER FLOORS. BELLWETHER RESIDENCES BEGAN WELCOMING TENANTS IN THE RECTOR BUILDING AT 79 W. MONROE STREET DURING THE WEEK OF AUGUST 31, ACCORDING TO THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES. THE 117 APARTMENTS, ON FLOORS SEVEN THROUGH 14, INCLUDE 41 AFFORDABLE UNITS; THE LOWER FLOORS REMAIN HOME TO A CHARTER SCHOOL AND WALGREENS.

The opening is the first completed office-to-residential conversion under the city's La Salle Street Corridor Revitalization program, which aims to bring housing to the Loop by redeveloping largely vacant office buildings. The \$64.2 million project received \$28 million in tax increment financing (TIF), a form of public financing. Its affordable share exceeds the program's 30% requirement, the Sun-Times reports.

The conversion reuses a building dating to 1905 while adding homes to downtown. But one completed project is only an early measure of the wider effort: the program's six projects are expected to add more than 1,000 apartments, and Bellwether was about 25% leased at the time of the report. Whether other conversions deliver at a similar pace-and how quickly their homes fill-will shape what this milestone means for the Loop.

Source: [Chicago Sun-Times - Chicago's plan for more Loop housing hits milestone with opening of Bellwether Residences](#)

10. Reflective roof coatings offer a heat-reduction retrofit for Australian homes

A Guardian report describes an Adelaide homeowner's experience with reflective roof coating and a small local tile comparison that found a marked surface-temperature difference. Researchers cited in the report say roof coatings may reduce indoor heat and energy use, though savings and payback depend on the home and roof.

IN ADELAIDE, THE UPSTAIRS ROOMS OF NIC JACOBSON'S HOME REMAINED HOT DESPITE UPGRADED INSULATION AND A LARGE AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM. AFTER HE APPLIED A HEAT-REFLECTIVE COATING TO THE ROOF AND A SUN-EXPOSED WALL, HE SAID LESS HEAT PENETRATED UPSTAIRS. HE COULD NOT QUANTIFY THE SAVINGS, BUT BELIEVED HIS AIR-CONDITIONING BILL HAD FALLEN SIGNIFICANTLY.

The Guardian reports that lighter roof surfaces generally reflect more heat, while many Australian roofs are medium or dark in colour. In a basic Adelaide comparison described by coating distributor Shane Strudwick, untreated concrete tiles reached 60C on a 22C day; tiles with one coat measured 26C by 1pm. That is a local surface-temperature comparison, not a measurement of indoor temperatures or household energy savings.

The potential value is practical: coating an existing roof may offer a retrofit option before a household considers other upgrades. University of New South Wales researchers cited in the article concluded that coating an otherwise functional roof could be recovered through energy savings and a longer roof life. But the article also cautions that payback varies with the original surface and a household's prior energy use, leaving the likely benefit for any particular home uncertain.

Source: [The Guardian - Cooler roofs will prevail: colours and coatings to help beat the heat](#)

11. Oxford Street closes nearly one kilometre to traffic

London has made the stretch of Oxford Street between Orchard Street and Great Portland Street traffic-free. The change is the first step in a wider transformation that the mayor says will add public spaces and other amenities.

ON SUNDAY EVENING, THE LAST CAR LEFT OXFORD STREET. BY MONDAY, THE STRETCH BETWEEN ORCHARD STREET AND GREAT PORTLAND STREET-ALMOST ONE KILOMETRE-WAS TRAFFIC-FREE, MARKING A MAJOR CHANGE TO ONE OF LONDON'S BEST-KNOWN SHOPPING STREETS.

The closure is being presented as a first step, not a finished redesign. London Mayor Sadiq Khan says further plans include green spaces and cultural events. Smart Cities World reports the ongoing transformation will bring more than 50 trees, over 100 seats, two public squares, rest areas and signage.

The case for the change is not only about moving people on foot. Khan describes Oxford Street as a retail destination struggling with falling footfall and store closures, while arguing that congestion and vehicle pollution make visits less appealing. Whether pedestrianisation helps revive the high street will depend on what follows: the quality of the public realm, how people reach the area, and whether visitors and

businesses respond as hoped. The traffic restriction is in place; the wider transformation and its effects remain ahead.

Source: [The Guardian - We've made Oxford Street traffic-free - and that's just the start. Soon there'll be green spaces for arts and music too](#)

12. Amman Design Week returns across five districts

Amman Design Week's fourth edition ran from October 2 to 17, 2026, with more than 220 designers and over 60 spaces participating across five districts. Its "Accumulations" theme connected design with place, material and memory, including exhibitions in historic buildings.

IN AMMAN, DESIGN WEEK IS NOT CONFINED TO A SINGLE EXHIBITION HALL. ITS FOURTH EDITION, HELD OCTOBER 2-17, 2026, SPREAD ACROSS FIVE DISTRICTS, BRINGING MORE THAN 220 DESIGNERS AND OVER 60 SPACES INTO THE PROGRAM. THE EVENT RETURNED AFTER THE 2019 EDITION, WITH "ACCUMULATIONS" AS ITS THEME: AN EXPLORATION OF HOW EXPERIENCE, MATERIALS AND HISTORY GATHER OVER TIME.

The program's urban setting is part of its appeal. The Design Weeks & Events Guide reports that events took place in studios, galleries and historic homes, including Darat Abu Adnan, which opened a heritage house in Jabal Al Lweibdeh for the first time as part of the week. The event also included exhibitions, student and community programs, workshops and talks, with free admission and registration required for some activities.

That mix puts contemporary design in conversation with the city's existing buildings and neighborhoods. It also raises a practical question for cultural events that use heritage sites and public-facing venues: whether the attention and access created during a short festival can support creative activity beyond its two-week window. The guide describes Amman Design Week as a broader curatorial platform with learning programs, commissions and mentorship throughout the year, and says future editions are expected every two years.

Source: [The Design Weeks & Events Guide - Amman Design Week 2026: Accumulations Marks the Comeback | The Design Weeks & Events Guide](#)

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