

FinEst Centre
for Smart Cities

SMART CITY CHALLENGE 2025

City Challenge

Max 3 pages

send to smartcity@taltech.ee by Sept 30, 2025

Challenge Title – (women's) safety in public space

City/county and country Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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Domain of your challenge – (choose 1) **Safe city** // Resilient city // Happy citizens

1. What is the future urban challenge that would need a solution to?

Safety in public spaces is essential for everyone. However, women and girls feel significantly less safe in cities and continue to face harassment, abuse, and acts of in some cases deadly violence. Recently, a 17-year-old girl was killed while cycling home on the outskirts of Amsterdam. This devastating incident has underscored the urgent need for action. This incident gained widespread attention in the Netherlands, receiving broad coverage in national media. Lisa's death sparked strong public reaction, including protest across the country under the slogan "Wij eisen de nacht op" ("We reclaim the night"), and renewed discussions about women's safety in public spaces.

The City of Amsterdam is committed to ensuring that women and girls can move freely and safely, day or night, without fear of violence. While this has always been a priority, the recent tragedy has heightened awareness among both citizens and policymakers about the critical importance of addressing this issue.

We recognize that this is a global challenge. By developing effective solutions, we can improve safety not only for women and girls but also for other vulnerable groups in cities and communities across Europe and beyond. Several research questions that we would like to address are: How do we design public spaces that feel inviting and inclusive for women? What would make women feel comfortable and represented? Research indicates that recreational spaces are frequently tailored to boys and men, while spaces that appeal to woman and girls tend to look quite different.

2. Innovation.

We have been working on the design of the public space and on smart lighting. Most of the actions consists of regular maintenance and optimization. We foresee that this is not enough. As an add-on, we would like to conduct



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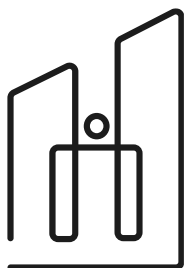


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research and experiments on more disruptive innovations. Among others, this could consist of autonomous drone flights to gain situational awareness on verified emergency calls, real-time detection on long one-way paths or community-based approaches to support information driven safety. Currently, we are analyzing existing sensor data that potentially says something about changed behavior in public space, especially for lonely cyclists. Furthermore; we are open to any ideas that can enhance women's safety. Together with other European cities, we would like to explore possibilities that are both suitable for all cities or customized to a certain city/neighborhood. Naturally, all proposed solutions must comply with applicable laws and regulations, including the GDPR.

3. Expected impact of your pilot solution.

We strive for a solution that improves both the perception of safety and the actual safety of girls and women. If the solution is applicable for other groups, that would be even better. In the city environment, we are aiming to be more inclusive, safe and comfortable. This would account to both moving and short stays in the public space. From a governance perspective, we are strengthening our relationship with the police and citizens; resulting in quicker responses to emergency situations.

4. Piloting

This issue is a top priority for the Municipality of Amsterdam. Our involvement in a pilot project could include providing resources from the Department of Innovation, the Department of Mobility & Public Space, and/or the Department of Public Order and Safety. Also, external partners such as the police or research organizations are eager to join this proposal with us. Additionally, we would like to engage (female) residents of Amsterdam to participate in the pilot.



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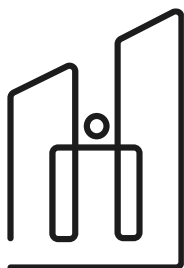


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CHECKLIST AND FAQ

Are you a city, municipality or a campus / private real estate developer?

Yes – you are warmly welcome to propose 1-3 challenges, one challenge per one template

No – do not send us any challenges but wait until we have gathered urban challenges and you are welcome to propose solution ideas by November 30

Are you describing challenge or problem? – **Yes**, then great.

Does a city need to propose a solution idea as well? – No, the researchers and companies will propose their solution ideas to the challenges proposal by the cities.

Can only Estonian cities propose challenges? Can only EU cities propose challenges? – No, cities* from whatever country are warmly welcome.

*A **City** is a local administrative unit where the majority of the population lives in an urban centre of at least 50 000 inhabitants and cities from countries with less than 5 cities of more than 100 000 inhabitants if they have more than 10 000 inhabitants. Those countries are: Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Malta (MT), Slovenia (SI) and Slovakia (SK).

Can our city participate without proposing a challenge? – Yes, that is also possible but then you need to vote for challenges proposed by other cities. This can be done between Oct 2-30.

How will the challenges be evaluated? – We will not evaluate the proposed challenges but other cities/municipalities/campuses/private real estate developers can vote for the proposed challenges. In Round 5 researchers will start to propose solution ideas only to the challenges that have minimum one Estonian city/county and one city/county from another country.



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