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'Hyderabad can be Smart City'

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HYDERABAD: Can a burgeoning megapolis like Hyderabad with growing population be turned into a smart city?

It could be if tried in a step-by-step by manner although the journey would be long. "Do it neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood," said James Brainard, Mayor of the Carmel city, USA, which he transformed into a thriving smart city in two decades.

Listing out the important attributes for a smart city, he described it as a place where everyone has an opportunity to thrive and prosper. It should have a good public education system, green space, parks, bike trails, walkways, clean air and water with reasonable taxes for delivery of services, ensure safety and construct buildings with good architecture.

Speaking at an interactive Round-Table on Smart Cities and Sustainability, Mr. Brainard, who is serving his sixth consecutive term as Mayor of Carmel city, narrated how he transformed a small village



Mayor of Carmel city, James Brainard, and president of Foundation of Futuristic Cities, Karuna Gopal, at a meeting in Hyderabad on Monday. - PHOTO: G. RAMAKRISHNA

into a modern smart city with all the attributes mentioned by him, including bike trails, good public transport system, park lands and green spaces. He also spearheaded creation of a new downtown with a state-of-the-art regional performing arts centre.

The construction of 100 roundabouts in place of traditional signalled intersections was among the environmental initiatives implemented in Carmel. He said the roundabouts have resulted in saving of 25,000 gallons of petrol each year, besides reducing injury accidents by 80 per

cent and overall accidents by 40 per cent. He said \$ 700 million was invested over the years in creating the infrastructure in Carmel city.

President of the Foundation for Futuristic Cities, Karuna Gopal, hailed the concepts of street diet and mixed land use adopted in Carmel city. She said there were 4,500 cities in India, which contribute 70 per cent of the country's GDP. The government was looking to shape them into liveable, sustainable and inclusive cities and launched Smart Cities, AMRUT and Swachh Bharath.