

## City sensors make bill-paying easier, track urban health

Two projects improving Chicago are tracking trash allowances for pay-as-you-throw bills and measuring the city's environment via Array of Things sensors.

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Some of Chicago's residents who pay for trash collection by volume now have their bills automatically generated. New trash carts containing radio-frequency identifier (RFID) chips allow Lakeshore Recycling

Systems to quickly link collections to the correct household. The system is currently being used in the Highland Park area.

In wider use throughout the city are the Array of Things sensors developed by a team of scientists from the University of

Chicago, the Argonne National Laboratory and the City of Chicago. Installed on lamp posts and the sides of buildings, the sensors track the city's general wellbeing. Temperature, traffic patterns, air quality, vibration and other aspects of city life are measured. Each sensor contains a camera, and all of the collected data is available to the public as an open resource. Development of both systems will focus on expanding use and creating apps to make use of the available information.

Open source data are increasingly valuable, and companies are helping the public make use of it. From transit planning apps to visual representations of government information, local authorities are more transparent than ever. What other public services could benefit from increased levels of access and citizen engagement?

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