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News Release

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Share! Four local startups selected for #InnovateDurham partnership to bring new ideas & solutions to #Durham

Durham Announces Partners for Innovation Partnership Program

Four Startup Companies to Bring New Ideas into City Hall;

Durham First N.C. City to Start Public-Private Innovation Partnership Program

DURHAM, N.C. – Four local startup companies will now get their chance to bring new ideas into City Hall and test out their innovative solutions to Bull City challenges.

The City of Durham [Office of Performance and Innovation](#) has chosen four partners for the [2017 Innovate Durham program](#), a pilot that gives startups and entrepreneurs a way to test their products or services using City data and infrastructure. The City received 34 applications from companies interested in participating in the program. A review committee narrowed the field down to four participants who each bring a unique, innovative solution to the program.

The companies were selected using several criteria, including the ability to support economic vitality or improve City operations, creativity and compatibility of the technology as well as whether they would help the City advance its [Strategic Plan](#). The four companies selected are all local to the Triangle, and three have offices in downtown Durham. The partners are:

- **Dropark** - a real-time parking app to help visitors find available public or private parking near their destination.
- **Talented** - an experiential learning game platform that gamifies trainings to help improve learning.
- **8 Rivers Networks** - an optical wireless communications system that delivers gigabit speeds over air instead of fiber.

- **Lucid Dream VR** - a virtual and augmented reality company that can visualize un-built structures or overlay data sets.

According to Josh Edwards, director of the City's Office of Performance and Innovation, the program provides a unique opportunity for local startups. "These four companies will get a chance to develop a use case with a large city, and for some of them, we'll be their first customer," Edwards said. "At the same time, the City gets to explore, at no cost, how new technologies may improve our operations. It's a win-win."

The pilot period for each company will run from October 6 through the end of 2017. Each partner will meet regularly with the Office of Performance and Innovation as well as selected City departments to help test their products. In January 2018, the partners will present their technology services and discuss the pilot period at a Demo Day, which will be open to the public.

"We're really excited about this first cohort of companies," Edwards said. "They each have a unique idea and approach to improving City services, plus the group shows off the robust startup scene we have here in Durham and the Triangle."

Brief descriptions from the companies about their technological solutions along with the assigned test-case departments are as follows:

Dropark

City Department: Transportation

[Dropark](#) is an organized alternative to the mayhem of busy city centers - their goal is to reduce the time and stress it takes to find a parking spot. By using innovative technology, they can direct motorists to real-time available parking spaces, and even allow motorists to reserve their parking space ahead of arrival to their destination. Dropark wants to increase the utilization of unused parking spaces, which means they will be partnering with both public and private parking lots. As part of Innovate Durham, they will be testing their application by providing their system in the downtown Durham area.

Talented

City Department: Human Resources

[Talented](#) is a micro-learning app, creating custom learning games for trainers and authors that are engaging and result in real-life skill transfer. As a part of Innovate Durham, City employees will have the chance to play Talented's cyber-security game, helping employees institute better habits across all City departments as well as in their personal online practices.

8 Rivers Networks

City Department: Technology Solutions

[8 Rivers Networks](#) is a Durham-based company that is being spun out of 8 Rivers Capital, the innovation development organization. 8 Rivers Networks has developed a groundbreaking optical wireless communications system that delivers gigabit speeds over the air where fiber is too difficult or expensive to deploy. As part of Innovate Durham, they will be building a connection between City Hall and a nearby City building to increase network capacity and service.

Lucid Dream VR

City/County Department: Planning

[Lucid Dream](#) builds virtual and augmented reality software applications for large enterprises, educational institutions, government agencies, and non-profits. They help forward-thinking leaders and their teams to leverage VR/AR tech to create and scalably deliver immersive experiences that impact audiences on a more visceral level than is achievable with traditional web and screen-based media. As part of Innovate Durham, they will help City staff and residents use immersive technology to conduct more informed evaluations of new construction initiatives by allowing unbuilt projects to be viewed virtually at human scale and in three dimensions during the planning and public input phase.

Durham is the first city in North Carolina to start a public-private innovation partnership program and modeled its pilot program after existing programs in [Kansas City, Mo.](#), [Pittsburgh, Pa.](#) and [San Francisco, Calif.](#) For more information, visit the [City's website](#) or contact Edwards at (919) 560-4111, ext. 20102 or by email at Josh.Edwards@DurhamNC.gov.

About the Budget and Management Services Department

The City of Durham [Budget and Management Services Department](#) is responsible for the development and oversight of the City's annual budget and Capital Improvement Program

(CIP). The department is also responsible for performance management, continuous improvement, and strategic planning. A division of the department, the [Office of Performance and Innovation](#), serves as internal consultants, helping City departments accomplish Durham's "One Vision and Five Goals" through advancing the City's [Strategic Plan](#); providing framework for data-driven decisions; fostering a culture of innovation; and facilitating process improvements.

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