

Challenge Statement

for the City of Fredericton and St. Mary's First Nation joint Smart Cities initiative
by Jenna Lyn Albert, Poet Laureate, City of Fredericton 2019 - 2020

On the bus ride home, I watch a video of a Fredericton 5th grader who used her allowance to buy coffeeshop gift cards for the homeless in her neighbourhood. It's been a Shakespearean winter for those living rough, one of discontent and thin tents— a child can see that. I want a city as compassionate as that 10-year-old, chatting with strangers outside the community kitchen like she's with old friends; a city as warm as the hand-knit scarves tied around street poles and fences alongside the water treatment plant for those in need of heat, of comfort. I want a city that recognizes me in the same way that the vendors at the Boyce Farmer's Market do on a busy Saturday morning, knowing my name and what I do for a living, that the Guinness aged cheddar I buy pairs well with the sweet apple cider from the next stall over, that I live around the block and it's a short walk. I want a city that's a friend and an ally to St. Mary's First Nation; a city that connects with its residents like the Bill Thorpe marries the North and South sides. I want a city old as the Wolastoq River and as current so fewer friends leave to go out west and instead take root, I want to retain our youth. I want a city as smart as its population, as its university town reputation: UNB and STU, NBCC and the College of Craft and Design nourishing artists and scholars, blue-collars and doctors. I want a city that's accessible, easily navigable, multilingual, a city that is a home, a safe haven, a welcome wagon. I want a city that's tech-savvy and customizable, a city to like, share, and follow.