CALIFORNIA BUILDING OFFICIALS
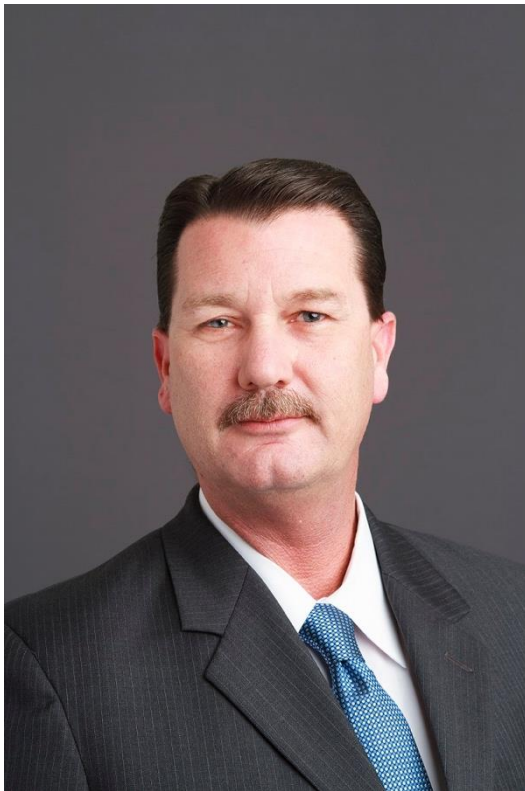
63rd Annual Business Meeting

Empowering Local Governments with Artificial Intelligence

PANEL DISCUSSION

APRIL 14, 2025

Moderator
Empowering Local Governments with Artificial Intelligence

John Weight

**City of Los Angeles,
Department of Building & Safety
(LADBS)**

**Executive Officer,
Deputy Superintendent of Building II**

Panel With You Today
Empowering Local Governments with Artificial Intelligence

Peter Stubbs

Gartner

Associate Partner

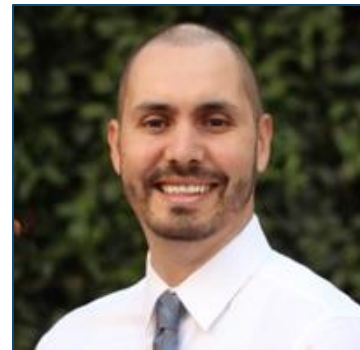Licensing, Permitting, and Regulatory Practice Lead

John P. Ramirez

MLJ Resources

CEO

20+ year career in municipal government, Community Development for the City of Norwalk

Rigoberto Garcia

City of Whittier

City Clerk / IT Director

Implemented "Ask Whittier"

Shan Sundar

Saira Solutions

CEO

Prior to Saira, 17+ year career in various industries including healthcare, manufacturing, publications, telco & gov

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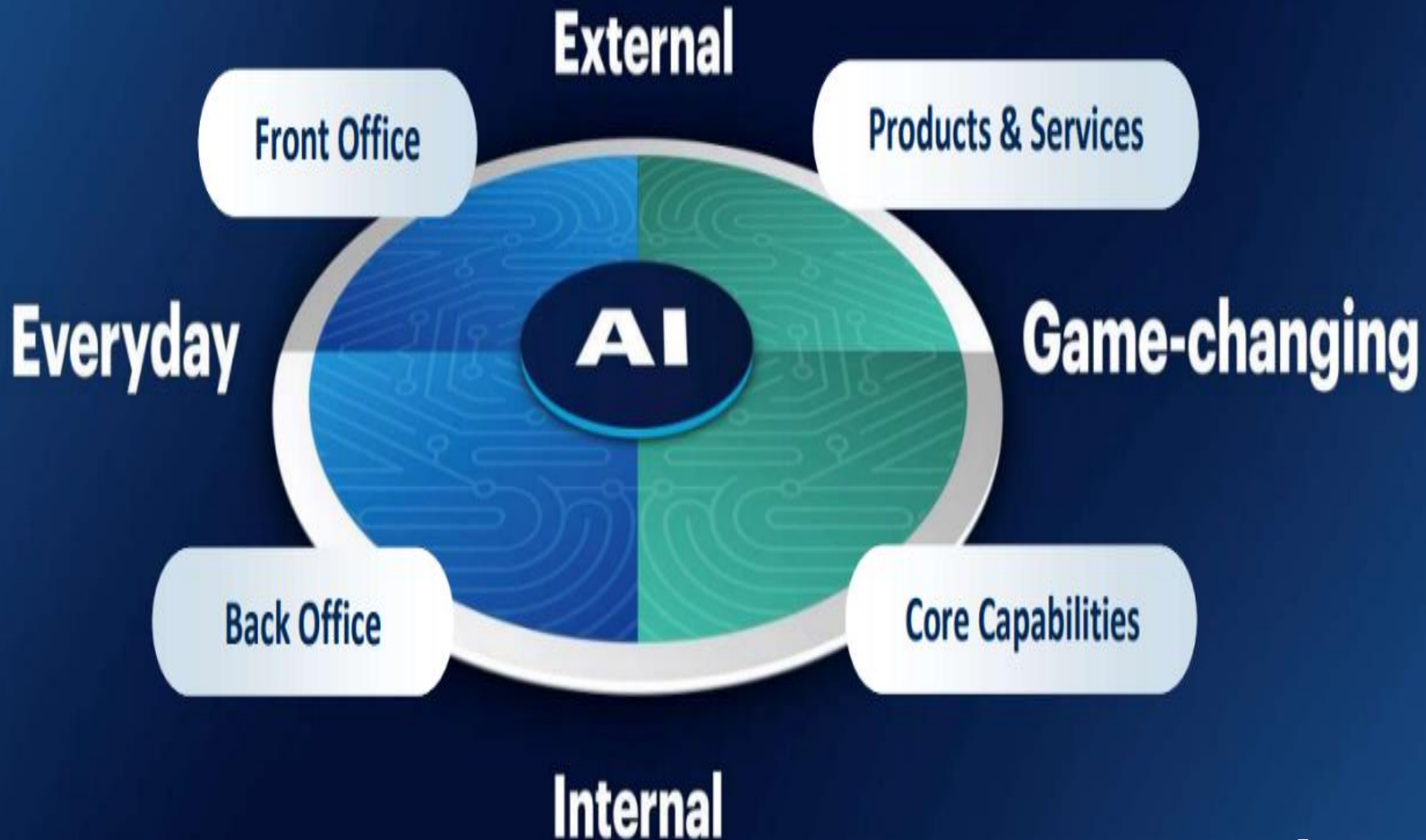## Framing the Discussion

PETER STUBBS
LICENSING, PERMITTING AND REGULATORY PRACTICE LEAD, GARTNER

AI is a catalyst for change… it has the power to shape quality of life in our cities in ways we cannot yet fully imagine…

The impact might not hit all at once...but we know waves of change are coming

Right now, city AI use cases are mostly "Everyday", but the future potential is "Game-changing"

As AI crests the top of the hype cycle, challenges and risks are becoming more evident – but there is real value to be realized
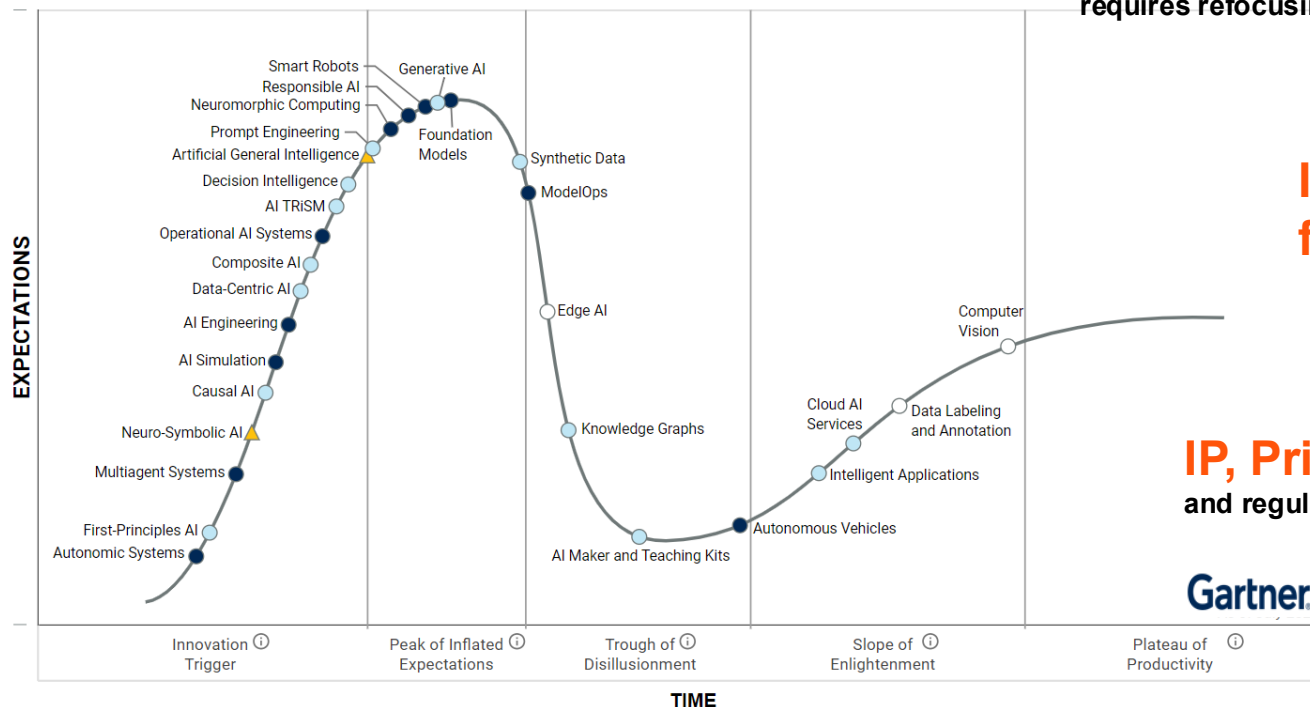
Time To Plateau Will Be Reached: ○ < 2 yrs. ◔ 2–5 yrs. ● 5–10 yrs. ⚠ > 10 yrs.

EXPECTATIONS / **TIME**

Innovation Trigger — Peak of Inflated Expectations — Trough of Disillusionment — Slope of Enlightenment — Plateau of Productivity

Labels on curve: Smart Robots, Generative AI, Responsible AI, Neuromorphic Computing, Prompt Engineering, Foundation Models, Artificial General Intelligence, Decision Intelligence, AI TRiSM, Operational AI Systems, Composite AI, Data-Centric AI, AI Engineering, AI Simulation, Causal AI, Neuro-Symbolic AI, Multiagent Systems, First-Principles AI, Autonomic Systems, Synthetic Data, ModelOps, Edge AI, Knowledge Graphs, AI Maker and Teaching Kits, Autonomous Vehicles, Cloud AI Services, Intelligent Applications, Data Labeling and Annotation, Computer Vision

Gartner.

Spiraling costs
requires refocusing on value and ROI[1]

Increasingly complex fraud using AI/GenAI[2]

IP, Privacy, Ethics
and regulatory concerns increase[3]

Disruption to 39%
of the workforce in the next two to five years through the use of GenAI[4]

1 Gartner: By 2025, growth in 90% of customized enterprise deployments of GenAI will slow as costs exceed value

2 Harvard Business Review, 06 June 2024
3 Gartner, 29 June 2024
4 Gartner, 27 Sept 2024

Examples from Panelists

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Empowering Local Governments
with AI

SHAN SUNDAR

CEO SAIRA SOLUTIONS

Disconnect between Private and Public Citizen

- 20+ years of experience working closely with **Building , planning divisions**

- **Cities have mastered data capture and storage** from various sources

- The #1 issue today:
  - ➤ Difficulty in **finding information quickly**
  - ➤ Delays in **Public Records Requests (PRRs)**

- Cities are under pressure to serve more, with less

- **COVID** became a silver lining — cities began reducing **foot traffic** to City Hall

Ask Saira

- **Saira was born to bridge the gap** between residents and city officials

- Vision to boost civic engagement by making **95% services self serve**

- Already being used by **cities attending today**

- 50% of requests and calls are on permit related information

- Built with city needs in mind — **budget-conscious** and **time-efficient**

How a virtual assistant can help?

- Saira - The Virtual Assistant (one click permit manager): **Summarizes data** from multiple sources into easy-to understand answers

- Assists with **building inspections** and finding the **right building code violations**

- Provides **permit and contractor history** in **multiple languages**

- Reduces **foot traffic to City Hall** and improves overall efficiency

- Consolidates data from multiple sources to **summarize answers instantly**

Story of Ask Norwalk

- What problem we faced at Norwalk?

  Residents waited long to get information.

- How did I strategize to solve the problem?

- Introduced Ask Norwalk – to bridge the Gap between city and residents.

- Residents can get information in no time for permit history, contractor information and reduce PRR.

AI in Digital Plan Review

- How AI can support in digital plan review and plan analysis.

- Building Inspector can take photo analysis.
- Staff report, ai can write report based on the inspection and save a lot of time for inspectors to do the actual work.

- Current difficulty in the system – (data spread across multiple systems)
- What can solve – simplified system integrating seamlessly with systems to group information (centralization)

- AI can help search the building code for information and references in different parts of the code related to the same issue and save plan checkers time on code research.

ASK WHITTIER *powered by Saira Solutions*

FY 2024 – 1,241 Public Records Requests

- 508 Related to Building Permits
  - From: Realtors, Construction Companies, Residents
  - Before: 40 minutes to fulfill.   After: One minute

FY 2025 – Anticipated 600 Public Records Requests

- 276 Related to Building Permits

Phone Calls for Community Development / Building & Safety

- From 40% to → 32% of phone calls
  - Heaviest call volume between 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
    - Most Common Call – Inspections
    - Questions about deviating standards.

ASK WHITTIER   powered by *Saira Solutions*

Building Permits for 6004 Painter Ave

👍 👎

Building Permits for 6004 Painter Ave:

1. **Encroachment Permit:**

    ○ **Description:** HHS Communication to bore and trench for Time Warner Cable/Spectrum along the east side of Painter Ave. Locate existing CATV vault tie-in to trench W to place 6' of 3" conduit. Bore SE to place 712' of 3" conduit. Bore S to place 45' of 3" conduit and place new Charter 17x30" vault. Bore south to place 1' of 3" conduit. Traffic control as shown on the attached plans. Work on Painter Ave. and Philadelphia St.
    ○ **Status:** Closed.
    ○ **Status Date:** 2020-12-24.
    ○ **Contact:** Building & Safety Division at 13230 Penn St, Whittier, CA 90602. Phone: (562) 567-9999.
    ○ **Permit Number:** ENC20-0257 [1] .

2. **Development Review Counter Permit:**

    ○ **Description:** 92-sf addition to existing storage located to the rear of SFR.
    ○ **Status:** Approved

How tall can my house be?

👍 👎

Based on the information provided in the documents, the maximum height limit for a building or structure located on a lot in zone R-2 is thirty-five feet [1] . However, this height limit may vary depending on the specific zoning regulations and requirements in your area. It is recommended to refer to the local building codes and regulations for precise information regarding the height limitations for your house.

1
reference   The provided reference(s) can offer more information on this question. For more information please contact the city (562)567-9850

1 501_PDFsam_Municodes.pdf - Part 1

PANEL QUESTIONS

Local Govt & AI: Current Uses

Where do you envision Building and Safety Departments can take greatest advantage of AI to improve their ability to fulfill their missions?
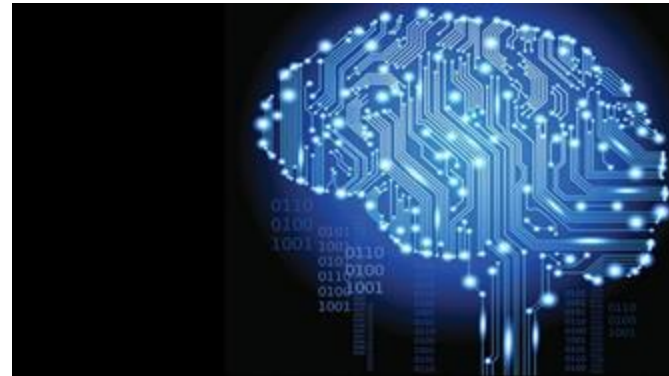
Local Govt & AI: Potential Future Uses

What major risks and issues are you most concerned about with the use of AI, and how to you address those challenges?

Local Govt & AI: Potential Issues

For organizations going down the path of incorporating AI into the technology stack, what concrete steps do you recommend?

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Concluding Remarks

PETER STUBBS

LICENSING, PERMITTING AND REGULATORY PRACTICE LEAD, GARTNER

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To be successful, leverage a tried-and-true framework to rollout AI capabilities

1 Establish Ambition & Vision

2 Governance & Risk

3 Technology and Data Foundations

4 Readiness & Engagement

5 Pilot & Evaluate Use cases

6 Productionize and Scale

7 Continually Sense & Respond

- **Align on goals and priorities**
- **Aim for quick wins while keeping your eye on high-impact use cases**
- **Prevent misfires through people & data readiness, security & privacy protection**
- **Empower a team; don't go it alone or isolated groups**
- **Measure outcomes to scale wisely**

"**AI is here. And, it's going to be here even more. So, you can't look at AI as something you are going to escape from... Fire can cook your meal or burn down the house. Use it in the right way...**"

**Mayor Andre Dickens,
City of Atlanta**

Interview with National League of Cities (NLC) podcast: "CitiesSpeak: Integrating AI with City Services" November 7, 2024