

**The Future of Global Cities**  
**Remarks on the presentation of the Creative Cities Strategies Report**  
**The City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario**  
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In the future cities will be distinguished only by the nature of their enthusiasm.

The globalizing market, telecommunications, information technology, shared corporate-political strategies—these will render common place what cities had hoped to offer in the past. Significant cities will offer the same amenities. What will attract investment, tourism and brand a city in the hearts of its citizens (and so to the world) is the nature of its enthusiasm; the delight the citizens feel in their style of conducting civic growth. Creativity is the engine and the guarantor of that enthusiasm.

This project, spearheaded by Toronto Mayor David Miller, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and other urban thinkers is a blueprint for transforming Canadian cities into creative hubs. It is done by cutting creativity loose from the box thinking that has relegated it to the arts and giving it premiere place in the dialogue of results. My project as Poet Laureate of Toronto has been to claim creativity as an ambience that prefaces technology, community building, citizenship and urban livability. This notion of civic aesthetic is what this report measures in terms of indices, best practices and comparative urban strategies.

Creativity means innovation, inventiveness, civic trust, liberation from the rigors of collaborative self-interest that have yielded incremental growth to Canadian cities. The time is past for incremental growth. A knowledge economy requires united vision, as a prelude to transactions and partnering. Creativity is the only inexhaustible resource. There is a slice for everyone. But if that slice is hoarded by special interests, we will have empire building, not city building.

The city that knows this doesn't care about the edge, because it is too busy being attractive to itself to catalogue the inevitable pilgrimage, financial and otherwise that comes its way. It is consumed by the prosperity of self-rejoicing and takes little time with invocations of confidence and cynical caveats to what it can be. Creativity is such that the canvas of city building allows only for mutual encouragement and acceptance of possibilities, spelled out in inter-civic allowance and not municipal protocol that defeats the visions it would aspire to. The citizenry of the creative city does not waste time on critical theatres of what went wrong, but is poised to encourage ideas that are hopeful. More importantly, the citizenry thrives on mutuality, based not on vested interest, but on collective vision. These are the principles of the creative city, without which any economic strategy is crippled.

Our report compares Toronto to creative cities such as New York, London and Barcelona. It bears out that Toronto lacks for nothing as a paradigm of urban creativity. Many indices place it in the top three in North America. But the lessons gleaned from the study are applicable to all Canadian cities, and invites all cities to a profound challenge.

It invites us to drop the mere system of alliances and partnerships that are the current model of business and inter-civic association. The business of making a city into a global icon depends on citizens moving from a model of negotiation to one oriented by civic allegiance. Creativity is not transacted. It is contagious and self-perpetuating based on the volunteerism of citizens that share loyalty, love and dedication to their city.

Finally, we must understand that “Creativity means business”. The business of creativity is not an option; it is the only strategy left for sustainable cities. It is the only strategy that inspires prosperity by civic delight.

Toronto officially pledged itself to creativity. What it asks of itself now, as must all Canadian cities, is that its players arrive at a “communion of purpose”, putting imagination at the service of the city and not just at the service of “sectors”

It is in this spirit that we offer the Creative Cities Strategies Report. It is in this spirit that Canadian cities must achieve their signature enthusiasm and insure themselves a place on the global stage.

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