



Brookings: U.S. Economic Prosperity Driven by Metropolitan Areas New Report – “MetroNation” – Identifies the Drivers of U.S. Economy

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November 6 – WASHINGTON, D.C. A new Brookings Institution study finds that the top 100 U.S. metropolitan areas generate 75 percent of our nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The report, “[MetroNation: How U.S. Metropolitan Areas Fuel American Prosperity](#),” documents how the key assets of today’s knowledge economy – innovation, human capital, infrastructure and quality places – are concentrated in America’s metropolitan areas, making them the economic centers that drive U.S. prosperity.

The U.S. has a total of 363 metropolitan areas, located in every state. These cities and suburbs with populations of 50,000 or higher are tightly linked by commuting patterns. When measured by employment, the 100 largest U.S. metros cover just 12 percent of the nation’s land mass but hold:

- 65 percent of the nation’s population and 68 percent of its jobs,
- 74 percent of college graduates and 76 percent of knowledge economy jobs,
- 78 percent of patents and 81 percent of R&D employment, and
- 72 percent of foreign seaport tonnage and 79 percent of air cargo

“This is evidence of the centrality of American metro areas to the health and vitality of our nation’s economy,” said Bruce Katz, vice president at Brookings and director of the Metropolitan Policy Program there. “Given that our metro areas like Cleveland and Minneapolis are in direct competition for workers and investment with places like Shanghai and Bangalore, we need these places to thrive.”

“Our global competitors are making strategic investments in innovation, human capital, infrastructure and quality places,” said Alan Berube, Research Director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program and author of the report. “Because these key assets are concentrated in metropolitan areas, we must make the same investments in our metro areas and empower them to prosper in this new global economy.”

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“MetroNation” underpins a national initiative launched today, [*The Blueprint for American Prosperity*](#), which calls for the federal government to be a better a partner with state and local leaders who are striving to build prosperity and opportunity for families, workers and businesses in the face of enormous global and domestic changes.

The Blueprint for American Prosperity will propose a new federal partnership with state and local government and private-sector leaders to strengthen metropolitan economics, build a strong and diverse middle class, and grow in environmentally sustainable ways. Over the course of the next year, Brookings will offer concrete domestic policy recommendations in such core areas as regional innovation, economic development, education, workforce housing, income support, infrastructure, energy security, and immigration. These recommendations will build on and leverage the extensive policy innovation and action underway in metropolitan areas.

The upcoming presidential election comes at a time of dynamic change: rising competition abroad, economic restructuring at home, unprecedented threats to the environment and explosive population growth. America’s ability to compete globally and meet the urgent environmental and social challenges of our time rests largely on the continued strength and productivity of our metropolitan areas.

“The Presidential candidates to date,” said Bruce Katz, “have not even begun to discuss the issues that are on the minds of the hundreds of millions of metropolitan residents: uncertain job security, crushing traffic congestion, rising income inequities and a deteriorating environment. We are a metro nation and it’s high time to start acting like one.”

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