

# FOREWORD

**H**ow does one measure a city? By the buildings that fill its skyline? By the efficiency of its rapid transit? Or, perhaps, by what Jane Jacobs called the “sidewalk ballet” of a busy street?

Certainly these are the memorable hallmarks of any modern city or metropolitan area. But a city’s true measure goes beyond human-made structures and lies deeper than daily routine. Rather, cities and metro areas are defined by the quality of the ideas they generate, the innovations they spur, and the opportunities they create for people living within and outside the city limits.

These are the elements that will be increasingly important as more people flock to cities than ever before. We have already passed the tipping point: a majority of people on the planet now live in metropolitan areas. In the developing world, 1 million people move to cities and metros every five days. At this pace, by 2050 three-quarters of the global population will call urban areas home.

Our language has not yet caught up with the realities. Often when we refer to cities we are actually referring to the broader economic, environmental, and infrastructure networks of the entire metropolitan region of which a city is a part. In this sense, it is difficult to separate the city from its larger metro region—or to separate the metro from the city. In today’s world, the two are inextricably linked.

But by any name, metro regions' ability to build resilience and achieve economic growth will have a profound impact on the future of our planet as a whole. This is something I have come to believe strongly as the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, and as the president of the University of Pennsylvania before that. And we have been reminded of this fact as a nation in just the past few years—that just as cities are a source of strength, they are often vulnerable to the shocks and disruptions of our modern world. When Superstorm Sandy barreled up the East Coast of the United States, making a direct hit on New York City, economic activity and commerce felt its impact all over the world. When Bangkok flooded in 2011, many global supply chains ground to a halt. Cities themselves are weakened by vulnerabilities in individual communities within the city. When one part of the city loses connection to a critical system, the stability of the entire region can be threatened.

But examples of innovation happening all over the world give us good reason for optimism. In London's rundown East End, the site of the 2012 Olympic Games, stadiums are giving way to schools, arenas are being converted into affordable housing, and thousands of new jobs are slated to come to the neighborhood. Rio de Janeiro is working with IBM to streamline its emergency response services, including state-of-the-art systems to help monitor weather and traffic, greatly improving response times and the quality of life in Brazil's frenetic metropolis. On the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, a new zero-carbon, zero-waste metropolis, Masdar City, is springing up from the desert, drawing its energy from solar power and other alternative technologies.

A similar movement is happening in metropolitan areas across the United States, where creativity and innovation—two of the nation's greatest resources—are most concentrated. The timing is no coincidence. As has happened many times throughout American history, many of the greatest innovations have come at times of great challenge, and this moment, on the heels of a string of economic troubles, is no exception. The financial crisis and the Great Recession proved that we could no longer apply old solutions to new urban problems, nor could cities exclusively rely on the action of the federal government. Rather, local governments and civil society as well as business leaders and urban planners have come together to chart their own course to spark job creation and catalyze long-term economic growth.

In *The Metropolitan Revolution*, Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley describe, in good detail, many examples of how this economic, social, and political transformation is playing out across the United States. The authors are more than just passive narrators. Rather, through the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, which Bruce founded, both he and Jennifer have been actively shaping a future that will be powerfully and distinctly urban. They are supremely suited to tell these stories and help us put this revolution into greater context.

Here are just a few of the stories you will encounter.

In Denver, elected officials have joined with civic and business leaders to transform the mountainous urban area into a world-class city, including one of the largest transit system expansions in the country, to attract new visitors and potential residents with its high quality of life.

In Northeast Ohio, leaders from philanthropy, private business, and nonprofit organizations are working across four metropolitan areas to create the necessary connections for a new age of advanced, innovative manufacturing and production, working as a cohesive unit for collective progress.

In Houston, a 100-year-old settlement house bridges the gap between isolated neighborhoods and the metropolitan scale of the economy.

In Los Angeles, the city's efforts to compress thirty years of transit and transportation infrastructure construction into ten years have catalyzed a successful nationwide push for federal transportation finance reform.

In New York City, a global metropolis highly dependent on the financial services sector, the city is working toward a more diversified, technologically innovative economy, creating new Applied Sciences campuses that are marrying new technology to established industries, creating a new field of urban science.

Although they hail from different places, different economic backgrounds, and different political parties, the actors you will meet in these pages are part of a pragmatic caucus, acting decisively to grow jobs in the near term and retool their metropolitan economies for the long haul. They are integrating their economic growth strategies with their unique assets and their competitive specializations, creating metro economies that export more and waste less, have sectors that serve as engines for both innovation and job creation, manufacture and ship more of what their workers invent and build, and create spaces where families can live, work, and prosper.

For much of its 100 years, the Rockefeller Foundation has supported the transformation of cities as part of its mission to promote the well-being of humanity around the world. From smart financing of large-scale infrastructure to new, citizen-centered e-governance to some of the great work described in this book, we are proud to be a part of the metropolitan revolution that Bruce and Jennifer are helping to lead and hope you will join them in supporting these triumphs and replicating their successes in cities across America and around the world.

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