



Calgary Chamber



CC The Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal



CHAIR

## NEWS RELEASE

### CANADIAN GLOBAL CITIES COUNCIL CALLS FOR NATIONAL URBAN STRATEGY TO ADVANCE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

**Ottawa, February 13, 2018**—Canadian city regions would benefit from a national urban strategy, that would support long-range infrastructure planning and funding to accommodate growth, according to a new report released by the Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC).

Released today, [\*Planning for an Urban Future: Our Call for a National Urban Strategy for Canada\*](#) proposes a shift from our current *ad hoc* project-based approach to federal investments in Canada's major metros to one that aligns investments with regional priorities to accommodate growth and competitiveness.

"The economic competitiveness of Canadian cities depends on the quality and capacity of urban social, transport and economic infrastructure," said Jan De Silva, President & CEO, Toronto Region Board of Trade and 2018 Chair of the CGCC. "Without an ongoing planning process and coherent funding strategy for infrastructure, Canada is falling behind other countries—this impacts business competitiveness, job growth and quality of life."

The CGCC's vision of a National Urban Strategy would lead to three broad policy changes:

- **The federal government would take the lead in measuring infrastructure quality, disseminating best practices and identifying national urban policy goals.** It would assign these roles to a central agency, or an office in an existing ministry. At present, measuring infrastructure maintenance shortfalls is left to a mix of provincial agencies and non-profits with no national standard.
- **City and city-region leaders would lead the development of long-range priority plans for urban infrastructure.** As in other jurisdictions, provincial governments, agencies, institutions and other stakeholders would sign on to agreements between Ottawa and cities or city-regions to execute on these plans, drawing the maximum possible buy-in and helping to maintain a system-wide focus on priorities.
- **Federal funding for urban priorities like infrastructure would "fund the plan" with per-capita or near-per-capita grants, rather than funding projects or programs.** This would give cities and city-regions more flexibility to substitute federal, agency, pension investments or other revenues for the municipal share of costs, just as Montreal has limited its cost exposure with the REM light rail project. The report argues that the usual 1/3,1/3,1/3 project funding model is unsustainable given limited city revenues and debt capacity.

"We have to stop measuring the federal government's urban impact by dollars spent or ribbons cut," said Patrick Sullivan, President and CEO, Halifax Chamber of Commerce and 2018 Vice-Chair of the CGCC. "Canada should follow examples set by our OECD counterparts—such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK—in setting broader urban goals and engaging cities and city-regions to develop plans consistent with national priorities."



“More private and public investment is needed if our air and sea ports, our rail, power and road grids, and our transit systems are going to be competitive with other global cities,” said De Silva. “We need to ensure we’re investing in local priorities first, and getting the right results—a national urban strategy is how we get there.”

The CGCC acts as a business-led counterpart to the advocacy work of the Big City Mayors’ Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and released its first report—*Increasing Global Connectivity & Economic Value through Canada’s International Airports*—in 2016.

The roles of Chair and Vice-Chair of the CGCC rotate on an annual basis. For 2018, Jan De Silva is Chair after serving as 2017 Vice-Chair, taking on the role from Adam Legge, former President and CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. Patrick Sullivan is the 2018 Vice-Chair.

The members of the CGCC are: **Jan De Silva**, President & CEO of the Toronto Region Board of Trade; **Michel Leblanc**, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal; **Zoe Addington**, representative for the Calgary Chamber of Commerce; **Iain Black**, President and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade; **Janet M. Riopel**, President & CEO of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce; **Loren Remillard**, President and CEO of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce; **Todd Letts**, CEO of the Brampton Board of Trade; and **Patrick Sullivan**, President and CEO of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce.

-30-

### **About the Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC)**

Founded in 2015, the Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC) is a coalition of presidents and CEOs of the eight largest urban regional chambers of commerce and boards of trade in Canada: Brampton, Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. Representing 52 per cent of Canada’s GDP and more than half of the country’s population, CGCC collaborates on international and domestic issues impacting our regions’ competitiveness. Infrastructure, the economic environment, trade and talent are its priority concerns.

### **For more information:**

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