
Toronto: Civic Governance in the Megacity

David A. Wolfe, Ph.D.

Program on Globalization and Regional Innovation Systems
Centre for International Studies
University of Toronto

Presented to the 10th Annual ISRN Meeting
Montréal, Québec
May 2, 2008



Theme III: Inclusive Communities and Civic Engagement

- Primary Hypothesis:
 - Economic performance of city-regions depends on:
 - Their ability to generate effective new forms of associative governance, collaborative leadership
 - Social inclusiveness of new governance forms



Competitive or Collaborative?

- Role and nature of local civic associations
 - How constituted?
 - How competitive?
 - How inclusive?
- Relations with formal government bodies or agencies
 - Complementary or otherwise?
 - Do associational activities support government initiatives?
 - How effective?
- Inter-organizational dynamics
 - Competitive or collaborative?
 - Degree of involvement of key industry actors
- How effective are the results of strategic planning efforts
 - Have they successfully mobilized the local community?
 - Do concrete initiatives results from the planning activities?
 - Impact?



Civic Capital & Social Inclusion

- Efforts to improve economic performance
 - must address both industrial transformation and social inclusion
- Role of civic capital
 - consists of interpersonal networks and solidarity within a community based on a shared identity, expectations or goals and *tied to a specific region or locality*
 - Civic capital acknowledges the critical role of local leaders in intensifying and formalizing collaborative networks within and between communities.
 - *also accounts for how it can be harnessed and intensified for meaningful regional governance by civic entrepreneurs.*
- To what extent do strategic planning exercises involve broader social community?
 - How inclusive are the groups that participate in strategic planning exercises?
 - To what extent are social issues framed as part of strategic planning exercises?
 - To what extent are 'inclusive' issues framed as part of agenda



Perspectives on Toronto

- The neo-liberal city
 - Amalgamation as neo-liberal project
 - Make city competitive for inward investment
 - “Toronto is being molded into a competitive city by a complex of class alliances and political coalitions, neoliberal planning and economic policies” (Kipfer and Keil, 2002)
- Focus on ‘boosterism’ and prestigious events
 - Economic development as way to promote Toronto as investment platform
 - International marketing
 - Waterfront revitalization
 - Olympic Bids, 1996 and 2008
 - Diversity and gay culture as marketing tools
- Public-private partnerships (P3s)
 - Highway 407

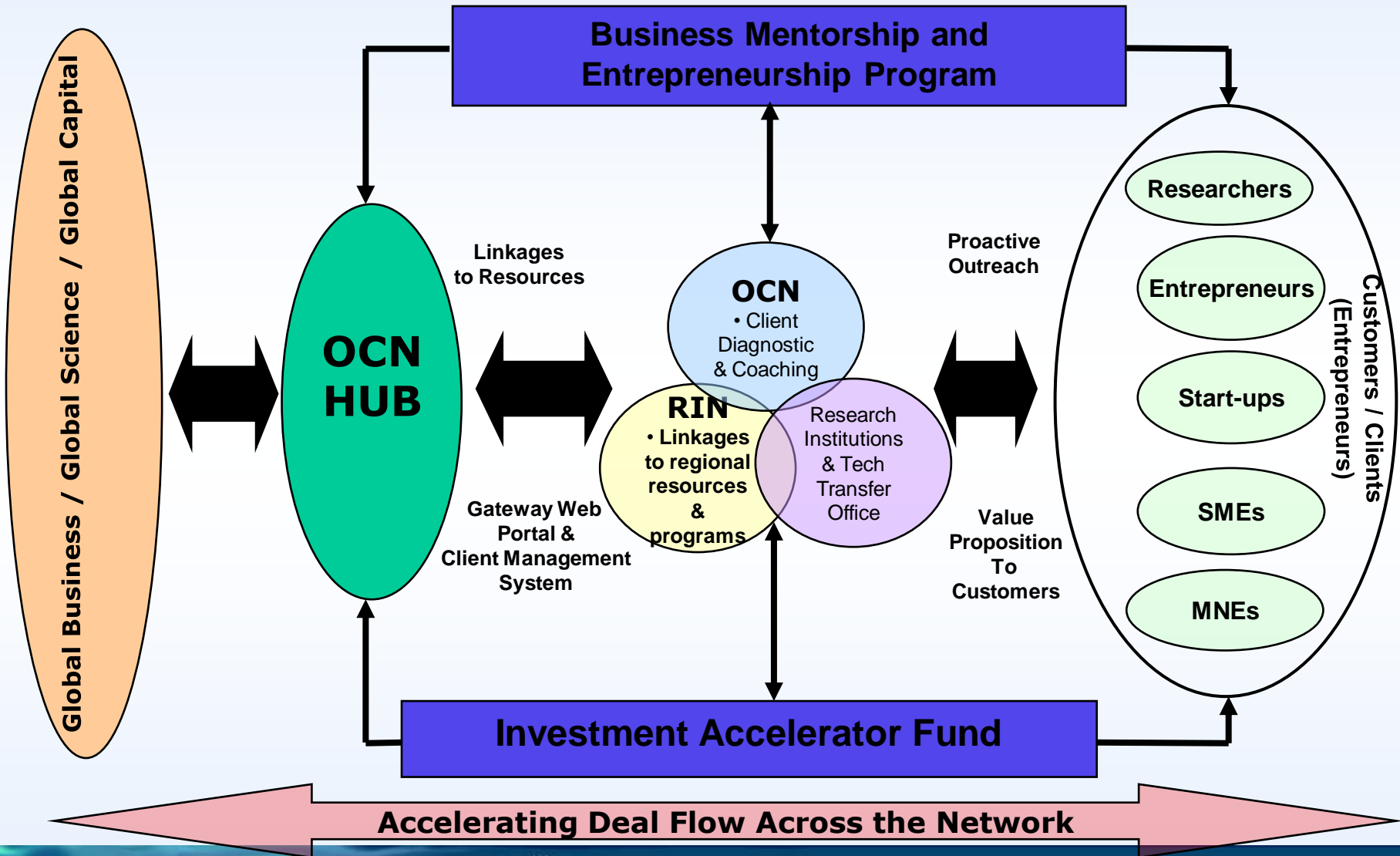


Governance Institutions and Development Coalitions

- Province of Ontario
 - Innovation Agenda
 - Commercialization Network
 - MaRS
 - Regional Innovation Networks
- City of Toronto – governing the megacity
 - Agenda for Prosperity
 - Mayor’s Committee on ??
 - Agenda for a Creative City
- Toronto City Summit Alliance
 - Multiple initiatives
- Urban Regeneration
 - Waterfront revitalization
 - Regent Park



Ontario's Commercialization Strategy



Regional Innovation Networks

- MaRS Discovery District
 - Federal and Provincial support aligned with existing research capacity
- RINs are a regionally based, multi-stakeholder, not-for-profit organizations driven by the private sector
- RINs serve as the foundation of the commercialization ecosystem (“the OCN”):
 - Identify a region’s comparative advantages and establish a vision
 - Identify and align commercialization and other economic development resources available at the regional level (commercialization roadmap)
 - Development and implement programs and services to address gaps as part of an annual implementation planning process
 - Create a focal and entry point for clients to access commercialization and other resources at the regional, provincial and federal levels
- Toronto Area RIN’s
 - BioDiscovery, WGTA RIN, York Biotech
 - All three maintain strong biotech focus, reflecting origins
 - Weak links or integration into other networks
 - Limited or no involvement with strategic planning exercises



City of Toronto Economic Strategy

- Key challenges
 - Regional competitiveness issues
 - Employment loss and impacts
 - Employment sprawl/congestion
 - Productivity impacts
 - Fiscal impacts – new City of Toronto Act
 - Mismatch between jobs and labour
 - Infrastructure demands and utilization



Economic Development Strategy for Toronto

- Toronto Competes
 - ICF Consulting
 - Cluster studies basis for economic development strategy
 - Economic Development Strategy, 2000
 - Limited involvement from associational groups
 - Sectoral cluster initiatives
 - Aerospace, finance, design, film, ICT
 - Limited municipal financing, slow to develop
 - Strong associational leadership
- Agenda for Prosperity
 - Mayor's Advisory Committee
 - Composed of 25 representatives from business, labour and education
 - Product of residual corporatist process
 - Limited consultation with broader associational groups



Agenda for Prosperity: Key Elements

● Four Pillars

- 1: Proactive Business Climate
 - Improve the business climate within the city to enable, accelerate and attract economic growth.
- 2: Global Toronto: Internationalization
 - Diversify our international portfolio by substantially increasing economic activity with cities beyond North America with a focus on emerging markets.
- 3: Creative Toronto: Productivity and Growth
 - Anchor and expand strategic industry sectors through increased competition and collaboration
- 4: One Toronto: Economic Opportunity and Inclusion
 - Enhance and expand Toronto's labour force and ensure that all residents have equitable access to the benefits of Toronto's enhanced economic competitiveness and growth.



Agenda for Prosperity: Key Initiatives

- Green economic development strategy
- Facilitate investment
 - Concierge service for jobs-related applications
- Promote innovation
 - Innovation infrastructure eg. MaRs, incubators
- Support sectors and cluster
 - Film and television
 - design,
 - ICT,
 - Toronto Financial Services Alliance
- Educational linkages



Creative City Planning Framework

- Builds on *Imagine a Toronto – Strategies for a Creative City*
 - Live with Culture
 - Flagship projects
 - ROM, AGO, Royal Conservatory, OCAD, National Ballet School, Gardiner Museum, Opera House
 - Toronto International Film Festival
 - ScotiaBank Nuit Blanche
 - Luminato
- Readaptive use of:
 - Young Centre and Soulpepper Theatre in Distillery District
 - Don Valley Brick Works
 - Wychwood Car Barns
- Result of integrated investment strategies
 - Across three levels of government
 - Public-private-voluntary collaboration/Third sector partnerships
 - Expand to integrated city building strategies and investments



Toronto City Summit Alliance

- Metagovernance through Toronto City Summit Alliance:
 - Not-for-profit non partisan group that addresses Toronto region's economic and social future
- Private and Community Sector driven collaboration (40 civic leaders)
 - Emerged from Mayor's summit on the future of the city
 - *Enough Talk: An Action Plan for the Toronto Region* (2003)
- Role of TCSA
 - “convenes leaders of all different sectors to identify key areas that need attention and then identifies actions that can undertaken very quickly”
- Over 2000 people involved with TCSA initiatives
 - Lobbies with senior levels of government to get them involved
 - Second conference, 2007 – over 300 participants



TCSA Initiatives

- Wide representation on strategic projects in ten issue areas
- Multi sectoral collaboration for:
 - Research and research-driven industry
 - (Toronto Regional Research Alliance);
 - Diversity/immigrant integration
 - (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council);
 - Community services/social exclusion
 - (Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force)
 - Reforming Income Security
 - (MISSWA)- Real impact on federal policy
 - Cultural promotion
 - (Luminato)
 - Connecting city-building leaders of the region
 - (Emerging Leaders Network)
 - Focus on Youth
 - YMCA-Toronto Youth Alliance
 - Affordable housing
 - (Affordable Housing Coalition)



TCSA Cultural Initiatives

- Sars Recovery efforts
- Luminato
 - 10 day festival devoted to Arts and Culture
 - Over 1 million participants in first year
 - \$15 million support from the province
 - <http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=2103>
 - But where is the City of Toronto?

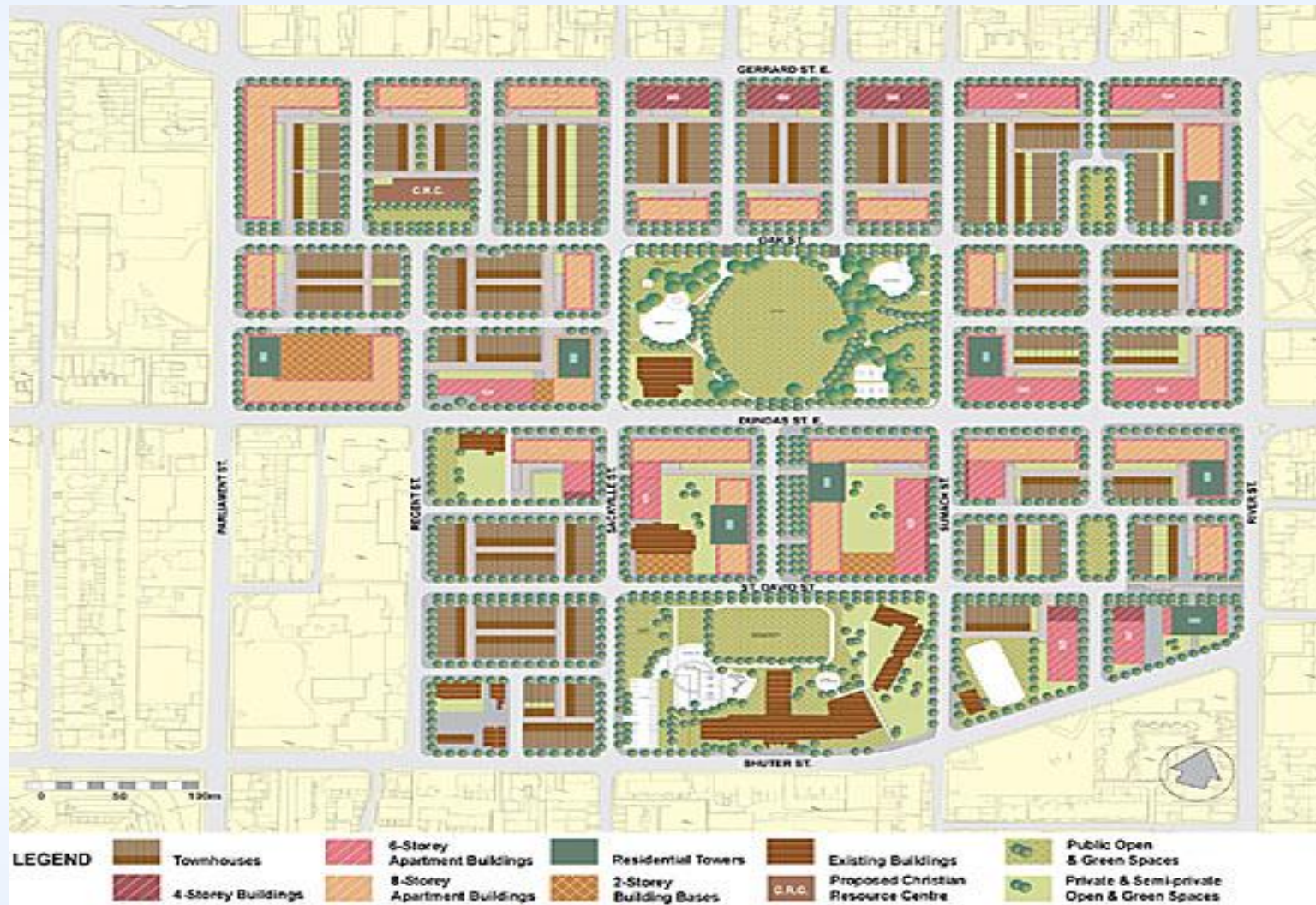


Regent Park: Inclusive Neighbourhood Revitalization

- Ambitious postwar public housing project in the 1950s
 - Significant slum clearance
- Goal to create a “garden city” within Toronto
 - The anti-Jacobs plan
 - Strongly criticized by municipal advocates
 - Over time, increasingly isolated
 - Ethnically diverse population
 - Space of exclusion
 - Toronto’s highest poverty census tract



Regent Park



Inclusive Revitalization?

- Commencing in 2003
 - 12 year city-led physical and social transformation
- Build mixed income housing
 - Enable commercial opportunities
 - Connect streets to the city
- Inclusive elements
 - Intensive community engagement in planning
 - Relocation guarantees for displaced residents
 - Ecological sustainability in building design
 - Educational and community development
- City looking for federal and provincial commitments
 - Toronto Urban Development Agreement



Conclusion

- Some successes
 - Dense network of civic associations
 - But challenge of working across wide array of social, cultural and economic sectors – and
 - Spatial scales!
 - Some evidence of multilevel governance across jurisdictional scales
 - Progressive economic development strategy at urban level
 - But corporatist process
- Strong limitations
 - Lingering effects of neo-liberal amalgamation agenda
 - Competition between associational initiatives and civic government led ones
 - Limited cooperation across provincial and municipal government
 - New City of Toronto Act
 - But where are is the federal government
 - Urban Development Agreement for Toronto?
 - Community Futures for Toronto?

