

Calgary Regional Partnership Hosts Panel of Big City Mayors at Collaborate to Compete

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Strong City, Strong Region was the topic of a panel discussion hosted by Colleen Shepherd, Executive Director, Calgary Regional Partnership at the 2017 Collaborate to Compete Symposium held in Ottawa, Ontario.

“This year’s Symposium highlighted the close connection between large cities and the Metropolitan Regions that include and surround them; connections that are key enablers for economic development, quality of life and future prosperity within the reality of the global competitive environment,” said Colleen Shepherd, Executive Director, Calgary Regional Partnership.



(from left to right) Colleen Shepherd – Calgary Regional Partnership, Mayor Don Iveson – City of Edmonton, Mayor John Tory – City of Toronto, Mayor Naheed Nenshi – City of Calgary, Mayor Brian Bowman – City of Winnipeg, Colleen Sklar – Partnership of the Manitoba Capital Region and Malcolm Bruce – The Edmonton Capital Region Board.

“The event allowed leaders to gain insight on how cities act as the lifeblood of a region,” she said.

“This year, we brought together big city mayors and other leaders from across Canada to provide an opportunity to learn from their experiences about how to better work regionally,” said Shepherd.

What is Collaborate to Compete?



[Collaborate to Compete](#) is a network of Canadian metropolitan regions that work together to increase the competitiveness of municipalities in a global market place.

Collaborate to Compete has leadership team, including:

- Colleen Shepherd, Executive Director, Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP)
- Malcolm Bruce, CEO [Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board \(EMRB\)](#)
- Colleen Sklar, Executive Director, [Partnership of the Manitoba Capital Region Board \(PMCB\)](#).

“At the symposium, we were able to gain insight on how cities act as the lifeblood of a region,” said Bruce.

“Brilliant conversations reinforced the important work we are all doing by continuing to build strong partnerships in order to become competitive first as a region, and then as a nation,” he said

“Even our best individual efforts can’t stand up against today’s complex and interconnected problems. We are seeing a growing trend where cities and regions are putting aside self-interests and collaborating,” added Bruce.

Collaborating to compete globally

According to Colleen Sklar, Executive Director, Partnership of the Manitoba Capital Region, “Regions are drivers of the global economy. They are our hubs of research and innovation, centers of human capital, and gateways of trade and immigration.”



“Big cities collaborating with metro regions have a role to play in economic growth, in transnational trade and in improving the competitiveness of Canada and North America,” said Sklar. “Collaboration between cities and regions is the key to staying competitive in the world economy of the future.”

Big City Mayors panel highlights

Shepherd said, “the purpose of the panel is to explore the role that the centre city can play in increasing and fostering regional collaboration and in setting the conditions in place for a prosperous and globally competitive region,”



(from left to right) Mayor Don Iveson – City of Edmonton, Mayor John Tory – City of Toronto, Mayor Naheed Nenshi – City of Calgary, Mayor Brian Bowman – City of Winnipeg and Colleen Shepherd – Calgary Regional Partnership.

“There is so much upside to working together,” said Shepherd. “We can do more with a group of municipalities working together than municipalities can do working on their own,” she said.

“We can’t afford to fail. We are realizing that our municipal neighbours are not in competition with us; we are competing on a global scale,” she added, “and we all benefit by doing it together”.

Impact on the bottom line. According to Mayor Brian Bowman, City of Winnipeg, “what is facilitating the urgency with a lot of the conversations (between cities and regions) on areas such as collective economic development and waste water is the bottom line. The way that cities are funded, the lack of resources and the incredibly high expectations considering the limited revenue sources force us to look for efficiencies though working with the greater region.”

Shared investment for shared benefit. According to Mayor Iveson, Mayor, City of Edmonton, “you’ve got to stop thinking about what you are going to get out of it and start

thinking about what you are doing to bring to the table.” Iveson said that in the Edmonton context a business, post-secondary education and community leaders panel was set up to advise on this approach. The panel came back with the following areas that need to be addressed:

1. Mobility and starting with regional public transit and a borderless approach to that
2. Regionalize approach to foreign direct investment including foreign direct investment and brand awareness
3. Integrated and aligned approach to infrastructure and land planning

Iveson said once these three areas are working and trust is building, it is possible to move on with greater collaboration there.

Be part of the conversation

Collaborate to Compete is a network and resource hub for metro regions sharing experiences, innovation, resources and best practices for:

- Connecting Canadian Metropolitan regions
- Providing mentorship, networking & learning opportunities
- Collaborating on shared issues
- Improving regional and national competitiveness globally

If you'd like to become part of the conversation, you'll [find the contact information here](#).

Check back on our website, CollaborateToCompete.ca in early 2018 for the 2018 Collaborate to Compete Conference details.

