

Imagine  
a Toronto ...  
Strategies  
for a Creative City.



# News Release

For Immediate Release  
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## IMAGINE A TORONTO...

*Strategies for Creative Cities Promotes Future Growth of Toronto's  
Creative Economy*

TORONTO — The Creative Cities Leadership Team presented its report, *Imagine a Toronto...Strategies for a Creative City*, to the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario today.

Strategies for Creative Cities started in December 2004 and culminated with the release of today's report. It was a joint venture between Toronto and London, England that brought together leading creative entrepreneurs and urban thinkers. Drawing on international best practices, they developed specific strategies to enhance the growth of the arts and creative industries, including film and television, books and magazines, interactive digital media, and design and architecture, and maximize their role in the competitiveness of both cities.

In addition to the report *Imagine a Toronto...Strategies for a Creative City*, comprehensive case studies on the culture sectors of New York, San Francisco, London, Barcelona and Berlin were undertaken to discover what Toronto can learn from these leading urban centres. The research culminated in an overall report that analyzes the case studies and outlines the lessons learned.

The project was guided by two Leadership Teams, one in Toronto and one in London. The Toronto side of the project was jointly funded by the City of Toronto, the Ontario Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Research and Innovation. The Toronto team consisted of 17 cultural, business and public policy leaders with an interest and expertise in some facet of the development of creative clusters.

Project Director for the Toronto team was Professor Meric Gertler, also Co-Director of the Program on Globalization and Regional Innovation Systems (PROGRIS), at the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto. Gertler is an economic geographer who studies the creative economies and innovative dynamics of cities. He has collaborated with author Richard Florida on comparative studies of Canadian and US city-regions.

"Creativity means business," said Gertler. "Creativity has become the ultimate economic resource, adding a new dimension to the competitive potential of cities around the world."

The London team was led by the London Development Agency, an agency of the Mayor of London's Office. Professor Graeme Evans of the Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University, was Project Director for the London team. The Munk Centre has collaborated with London to develop ways of strengthening the creative industries' links with their respective regional economies.

"Economic development and creativity are not separate entities," said Graham Hitchen of Creative London at the London Development Agency and Co-Chair of the Toronto-London Creative Cities Project. "In London, there is increasing recognition of the role of creativity in economic development and growth."

The four main themes of the report are:

**1. People** – expand creative programming for youth, transform local community centres into creative community hubs, and fund arts and creativity in public education;

**2. Enterprise** – provide specialized support and business skill development for creative industries, increase available cultural and creative ‘risk’ capital, advance Toronto as a centre of design, and develop a creativity/innovation convergence centre;

**3. Space** - systematically provide affordable and stable creative space, create a mortgage investment fund for creative industries, support development of waterfront ground-floor strategy, support design review panel, and animate the city below, i.e., creativity in Toronto ravines;

**4. Connecting Toronto’s creative elements** - create an infrastructure dedicated to connecting and promoting creative Toronto, and provide ongoing, stable funding for creative projects.

“Creativity must become a way of life,” said Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, Toronto’s Poet Laureate and member of the Creative Cities Leadership Team. “It is not a matter of ‘sustainability’ but of survival, and the beauty that inspires it.”

*Imagine a Toronto...Strategies for a Creative City* and its supporting case studies and lessons learned report are available on the web site: [www.imagineatoronto.ca](http://www.imagineatoronto.ca)

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