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Beyond the Money: The Challenge of Collaboration in Canada's Cities

Friday, February 27, 2004 – Much of the recent attention to cities has centred on the question of resources – where will they get the revenue base needed to match their responsibilities?

It's an important challenge, but by no means the only one if we are to make the most of the creative, social and economic potential of Canada's urban centres.

Perhaps the greatest challenge is building a new, multi-level approach to the national problems that are now spatially concentrated in cities. Failing that challenge will result in wasted human potential, rising social tension and a setback for Canada's economic competitiveness.

Neil Bradford, Research Fellow, Cities and Communities, with CPRN's Family Network, tackles this subject in an article, ***Place Matters and Multi-level Governance: Perspectives on a New Urban Policy Paradigm***, in the February issue of *Policy Options*.

Bradford finds that Canada lags behind both the European Union and the United States in its approach to the complex public policy challenges localized in cities. "While governments at all levels are active in cities," he writes, "there is little evidence of a coherent agenda, systematic coordination, or even appreciation of importance of place quality to good outcomes." Still, though Canada has some catching up to do, it can benefit from the European and American experience with multi-level governance in cities.

Bradford is realistic about how long it will take, given Canada's constitutional realities, its intergovernmental rivalries and entrenched bureaucratic routines. He also recognizes that the diversity of Canada's cities demands variety and flexibility in approaches to problem-solving. But he is equally clear that in an era when Canada's place in the world is increasingly determined by the sustainability of our cities, we have no choice but to find a way to collaborate.

You can access or download a copy of his article by clicking here.

For other perspectives on the country's cities, see *Policy Options Vol. 25 #2* at http://www.irpp.org/po/index.htm

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