

# Multi-level Governance: Challenges and Opportunities for the Toronto City-Region

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OECD Meeting December 4 2007

# Presentation Outline

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## *Three Themes*

1. City-Regions Matter: The Case for Multi-level Governance
2. Multi-level Governance in Canada: Existing Mechanisms and Practices
3. Moving Forward in Toronto: A Proposal

# Multi-level governance in City-Regions?

“The paradox of globalization: cities matter more not less to national prosperity and well-being”

- **Four urbanizing flows: people, capital, ideas, policy**
- **Issues of *national significance* play out in city-regions:**
  1. Innovation (high tech clustering)
  2. Inclusion (distressed neighbourhoods)
  3. Sustainability (GHGs and sprawl)
  4. Diversity (cross-cultural understanding)
- **Progress on any or all of these requires strong urban/regional infrastructures**



# Multi-level governance in City-Regions?

- The big issues play out in city-regions but they are not municipal problems or local responsibilities *alone*
- Complexity or 'wickedness' demands collaborative responses that join-up and/or align resources, competencies, capacities
- Canada's challenge: new urban/regional governance that includes empowered devolution *and* multi-level partnerships
- Multi-level governance *because* the big issues cross constitutional allocations such that no single level of government owns the problem or creates the solution

# Multi-level Governance in City-Regions? 5 Value-Adds

1. **Coherence and Focus:** Federal system inevitably finds all three levels of government *policy active* in urban centres
2. **Bending the Mainstream:** Sectoral policy *customizing* to address the particular conditions and priorities of places; "local seat at the policy tables"
3. **Targeted Innovation:** Horizontal policy integration for major projects such as *at risk neighbourhoods* or *at edge clusters*
4. **Piloting and Scaling:** Road-testing new approaches, learning lessons, and informing federal/provincial frameworks
5. **Good Governance/Better Outcomes:** "*Federalism that Works*" demonstrated through improved client service, timely and relevant investments, and local citizen engagement, private sector participation in policy process

# Multi-level Governance in Canada: Existing Activity

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Literature tends to focus on European exemplars: UK, France, Sweden, (EU and Multi-level Governance)

But Canadian federation has experimented in an incremental manner with a *menu of mechanisms* that enable intergovernmental coordination/collaboration

Such mechanisms have evolved without constitutional change (organizing framework: New Deal for Cities and Communities)

They respond to the reality of policy interdependence while respecting provincial jurisdiction in municipal affairs

Combination of crisis, learning, and negotiation has produced some innovative and relevant problem-solving mechanisms



# Multi-level Governance in Canada: Existing Activity

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Canada's menu of MLG mechanisms:

1. Framework Agreements
2. Revenue Transfers
3. Enabling Programs
4. Action Research
5. Policy Dialogue

Each works through a "division of policy labour" among governments in tackling complex, localized problems

# Using the National-Local MLG Policy Pathways ...

## Five representative Multi-level governance initiatives:

1. **Framework Agreements:** *Urban Development Agreements* for sectoral/place-based policy in Western cities
2. **Revenue Transfers:** *Federal Gas Tax* for Green Infrastructure/Community Planning for sustainable growth
3. **Enabling Programs:** *SCPI/HPS* targeted homelessness program with flexible municipal/community implementation
4. **Action Research:** *Action for Neighbourhood Change* with Third Sector engagement in distressed neighbourhoods (Scarborough)
5. **Policy Dialogue:** Intergovernmental Committee on Employment (ICE) Toronto-based social and economic forum

*With the notable exception of #1 (UDA), all in play in Toronto*



# Multi-level Governance for the Toronto City-Region?

But Multi-level governance may be most appropriate in the largest city-regions like Toronto

Challenges and opportunities on an order of magnitude that demand special policy focus, extraordinary investments, and joined up action:

- *Immigration Settlement/Cultural Diversity*
- *Transportation Infrastructure/ Urban Sustainability*
- *Knowledge Clusters/Creative Economy*
- *Affordable Housing/Poverty Reduction*

And Toronto City-Region has *robust local platforms* for MLG: TCSA, GTUW, TCHC, Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, 18 Universities and Colleges, Innovation Parks, and National Centres of Excellence, MaRS, City of Toronto economic/social development strategies

# Moving Forward in Toronto: A Proposal

**Canada-Ontario-Toronto Partnership Agreement**  
*"an integrative governance and policy focal point"*

## **Mandate:**

*"To develop shared vision, common goals among governments and realize these through joint planning and action on specific projects."*

## **Structure:**

**Partnership Table – Political Representation**

**Management Committee– Senior Administration**

**Task Teams– Working Level Public, Private, Community**

*Note: Decades long UDA experience in Vancouver and Winnipeg are learning opportunities*

# Moving Forward in Toronto ...

## Operations:

- **Bending the Mainstream:** (region-wide): Immigration, Environment/Transportation, Income Security/Poverty Reduction
- **Targeted Innovation** (neighbourhood base): Regent Park, Waterfront/Donlands, MaRS
- **Piloting and Scaling** ("best practice" informs provincial/federal policy): Strong Neighbourhoods, Safe Communities, Knowledge Clusters
- **Who does What?** Monitor roles and responsibilities for optimal policy division of labour (principles for uploading and devolving)



# Moving Forward in Toronto ...

- Issues arising:
  1. **Agreement Scale?** Functional region (GTA/Golden Horseshoe) or municipal boundaries (City of Toronto)
  2. **Intergovernmental Models?** Open Federalism or Multi-level Governance
  3. **Infrastructure Deficit?** Financial urgency overwhelms governance/policy innovation
  4. **Gaps in Federal Policy Machinery?** No Regional Development Agency for GTA
  5. **MLG is Challenging!** Political Leadership, Administrative Creativity, Civic Entrepreneurship