



## Future-ready City-Regions: The Next Competitive Edge?

A recent post by Alex Steffan poses some provocative challenges to urban planning and urban planners, and municipal executives around the world. In a sense, it illuminates the core challenge and intention of the world's new [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and [New Urban Agenda](#). The following paraphrases and excerpts the key points.

In light of our climate and our other planetary crises, many of us and our children will likely make residential location decisions in the coming years based on a city/region's future-readiness. But which city to select; maybe the most "future-ready?"

To realistically evaluate the future-readiness of a place one can assess three kinds of brittleness: systemic, operational and social. Yet, readiness to act matters at least as much as how well-positioned a place is now.

No city-region on Earth is nearly as future-ready as it needs to be. Every place should be investing boldly over the next decades in ruggedizing their systems, growing civic resilience and building up the local capacity for innovation, adaptation and rapid cultural change.

Yet, head-starts are not destiny. Because so much work remains to be done, everywhere, being a city-region ready to meet the future (whatever it looks like) is—to some real degree—more important than being luckiest in location or wealthiest at the moment.

Successful engagement with future turmoil will demand leadership, strong civic cultures, commitment to change, tough choices, aggressive action on big systems. No city out there is moving fast enough, yet, but some are beginning to show signs of understanding the scope, scale and speed of the change demanded of them.

A city that's moving fast to meet the future may have more advantage than one that started father ahead, but is stuck and complacent, or simply unwilling to go beyond mere incremental change.

It's likely that a city that really threw itself to the forefront of urban innovation (and had a clear commit to even bolder innovations to come) would find itself a magnet for civic talent, entrepreneurial efforts and global investment.

Wherever it may emerge, the edge a leading bright green city-region gains in the next 20 years could put it in a position of increasing prosperity for a century, even in the midst of hard and turbulent times.

The whole world will eventually need what that city is inventing. The solutions it explores and develops could benefit the entire world and launch a wave of successful enterprises.

***Paraphrase/Excerpt, Alex Steffan, Future-ready cities: Choosing where to live on a planet***



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*in crisis; Why the capacity and willingness to change trump everything.*

*<https://medium.com/@AlexSteffen/future-ready-cities-choosing-where-to-live-on-a-planet-in-crisis-478f3e2f3fb8#.isv6sy4qm>*

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