



# Sustainability as a platform for city growth

Populations in the world's largest 750 cities are expected to grow by 410 million between now and 2030. According to Oxford Economics' Global Cities report, which UPS co-sponsored and whose data will be drawn upon here, we can attribute this growth in large part to the migration from the farm to the cities across developing economies.

This migration is spurred by young people drawn by economic opportunities and the excitement urban environments offer, the rising cost of long-distance commuting—and the sheer fact that for many across the globe, the pace of city living is becoming more attractive.

Rapid urbanization signals that strong economic growth for cities is likely to be on the way—but there will be a need for large-scale investments and creative development to allow cities to adapt to their evolving needs. Population growth can result in more congestion, air pollution, and noise—all of which can negatively impact residents' health, productivity, and, of course, their happiness.

But cities, while dense, do not have to be polluted. In fact, urban spaces provide more opportunities for us to create communities that are more sustainable and efficient.

Let's take a closer look at cities that are ramping up their planning and sustainability efforts. For example, London—a city that struggles with poor air quality—is experimenting with car- and bike-sharing to reduce the need for private car ownership and ultimately ease congestion. Meanwhile, researchers in China are looking into ways to reduce cities' air pollution through rooftop sprinklers that collect particulate matter and express bus lanes to minimize traffic congestion and commuting times.



Smart, creative solutions like these must be tailored to an environment's specific needs and history. Urban planners in older cities with ancient city walls or medieval buildings must take into account their older infrastructure, tighter spaces, and the need to comply with preservation laws. Meanwhile, younger cities may well require a different approach. For us in the Greater Toronto Area, short term solutions may ease the congestion concerns that we all face for a limited period of time, however long term strategies are essential. This is especially true as according to the Oxford Economics' Global Cities report, Toronto will see an increase of 1.4 million in population by 2030—ranked 5th for population growth cities in North America.

Ultimately, maximizing efficiency and implementing smart, sustainable initiatives in urban spaces will create a platform for future growth. We do have the benefit of being able to look at, understand and

potentially adopt what has worked in other cities across the globe. We must be cautious however not to focus on one specific element, like congestion, on its own. Isolating one symptom could have adverse effects on the environment and economic growth. A long term, well executed strategy and plan can ensure that gains can be made for all the endeavours that a striving city needs. Not only will these endeavours pave the way for a growing population and the accompanying changes to space and resources required, they will also create jobs and support local development. Perhaps most importantly, these kinds of sustainable practices will contribute to the health and happiness of urban citizens, as their lives are made more convenient, more peaceful, and safer by a continued determination to quell congestion and tame pollution. A sustainable city is a city that others will want to move to—and one that will be likely to see continued economic growth.

To download the report, visit <http://www.oxfordeconomics.com/cities/report>