

[Home](#) > [Latest Posts](#) > [Top Stories](#) > [ULI Trustees Discuss Inclusivity as a Key Component of Prosperity](#)

## ULI Trustees Discuss Inclusivity as a Key Component of Prosperity

Posted on **February 21, 2017** by **Archana Pyati**



Richard Florida, ULI Global CEO Patrick Phillips, and ULI trustee Ed Glaeser speak at the recent midwinter meeting of ULI global trustees.

The pressing need for inclusivity to be part of urban revitalization was a key topic at ULI's recent Mid-Winter meeting in Washington, D.C., attended by the Institute's global trustees, with former ULI visiting fellow Richard Florida and ULI trustee Edward Glaeser leading a discussion on the future of cities.

The main takeaway: while the urban evolution of the 21st century is boosting the prosperity and quality of life in many cities, a growing gap exists between the haves and the have-nots in successful cities, as well as between the cities that have succeeded and those that have not. Failure to address these inequities threatens to undo the progress made and could hamper future regeneration efforts.

"The clustering of urban activity, which drives innovation and economic growth and is the main source of productivity, is the exact same thing that is creating divisiveness in our nation," said Florida, director of cities at the Martin Prosperity Institute in Toronto. "In our rush to magnify the impact of clustering creativity and knowledge in cities, by not dealing with the negative consequences, we [society] have let the divides grow and fester." Florida, who explored the revival of urban areas in his 2002 book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, discusses the repercussions of the revival in his latest book, *The New Urban Crisis*, slated for release this spring.

"What we have is a new urban crisis, which is a crisis of success," Florida said, listing five dimensions of the crisis:

- Winner-take-all urbanism, in which a small group of highly successful cities gets most of the spoils;
- Inequitable distribution of the benefits of success between the educated, higher-income workers and the uneducated, lower-income workers;
- The loss of the middle class in highly successful cities, leaving no path to upward mobility for those with lower incomes;
- Growing inequality within and between suburbs, creating a patchwork of concentrated advantage and concentrated disadvantage; and
- Global urbanization that has not necessarily resulted in higher incomes for all who have migrated to cities.

Addressing the new urban crisis will require an emphasis on "inclusive prosperity" that involves efforts to create career pathways for lower-income people, Florida said. It will also require a recognition of the value of providing choices in how and where people live, he said. "Whether we are urbanite or suburbanite, we make choices, and we need a system to accommodate those preferences. This means we have to do density right."

Glaeser, who is the Glimp Professor of Economics at the Harvard Kennedy School at Harvard University, pointed out that a primary factor contributing to the air of divisiveness throughout the nation is the sharp rise of joblessness among people who typically would be in their prime earning years, particularly among men formerly employed in the manufacturing industry. "The impact of joblessness on misery, drug abuse, and divorce is vastly higher than [the level of] income," he said. "This feeling of uselessness is a huge problem for America."

Thriving cities offer the most opportunities for jobs in areas that require vocational training, providing steady employment for workers whose skill sets cannot be adapted to the knowledge-based economy, Glaeser said. "Cities have rich people and poor people; they are unequal. But good things happen in cities that attract poor people," he said. "Cities are less painful places to be poor [than struggling rural areas]."

Glaeser cited several areas that must be addressed in order to keep the momentum going in vibrant cities and boost those that are attempting a turnaround. They include:

- High housing costs;
- A decline in entrepreneurship;
- An imbalance between regulations imposed for different types of business startups;
- Underperforming urban schools; and
- Inadequate investments in infrastructure.

Florida pointed out that ULI, which reached its 80th anniversary in 2016, was created to address the "old urban crisis," marked by high crime, rampant poverty, and flight to the suburbs. The same level of member expertise and engagement is needed to help solve the new urban crisis, he said.

This entry was posted in [Top Stories](#), [ULI Connect](#) by [Archana Pyati](#). Bookmark the [permalink \[https://uli.org/uli-connect/uli-trustees-discuss-inclusivity-key-component-prosperity/\]](https://uli.org/uli-connect/uli-trustees-discuss-inclusivity-key-component-prosperity/).

