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# HUFFPOST DETROIT



[Rana Florida](#)

CEO, The Creative Class Group & Best-Selling Author, Upgrade

## Lessons From Other Cities at Detroit's Global City Forum

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It's a fact of life: cities rise and cities decline. While the largest can hold their dominance for a very long time, second- and third-tier cities come and go. Foreign competition or the rise of altogether new industries and modes of production can erase their advantages; so can shifts in the domestic or global political order. Detroit was a veritable powerhouse for the first half of the Twentieth century. It not only turned out the majority of the world's automobiles, it was a center of innovation, not unlike Silicon Valley today.

Since its population peaked at 1.8 million in 1950, Detroit has fallen hard; the last census pegged its population at just over 700,000. But if Detroit is down, it is far from out. True to its motto *Resurget Cineribus* ("it will rise from the ashes") and thanks to its legendary grit and determination, the city is already forging a comeback. "Detroit is a perfect environment for starting a new business," declares Randall Fogelman, Vice President of Business Development of [Detroit's Eastern Market Corporation](#). "There are great resources here and a very supportive peer community that is truly about making the pie bigger, not just fighting over the same piece."

"Detroit, and cities like Detroit, are the New Frontier of the 21st Century," says Detroit and Miami cultural supporter, Gary Wasserman, Founder and Director of [Wasserman Projects](#). "Detroit is an urban experience being reimagined with room for experimentation and exploration of a new economy and an urbanizing lifestyle to be discovered and created.

What lessons can we learn from Detroit's and other cities' struggles to remake themselves? That is the question that will be at the heart of [CREATE: Detroit](#), the first of what will become an annual ideas fest. Hosted by the renowned urbanist [Richard Florida](#) and the [Creative Class Group](#) in partnership with [Rock Ventures](#), [Shinola](#), [M1/DTW](#), and [Planterra](#), the program will bring together city builders, city leaders, place makers and urbanists from across North America to share their insights and best practices for building and rebuilding more creative and inclusive cities.

"As a company dedicated to humanizing spaces with nature-centric designs, it is exciting to have Richard Florida share his philosophy of creating prosperity through creativity in our hometown," said [Shane Pliska](#), President of [Planterra Corporation](#).

### **Lessons from Miami**

How did down-at-the-heels Miami Beach, once written off as a place where "old people go to die," become a global hotspot? How does a gritty, dangerous neighborhood like Miami's Wynwood become home to the world's top luxury brands including, Valentino, Fendi, Tom Ford, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada and more? Miami's urban core has been transformed in less than two years as it's added nearly 120 top retailers (with 50 new stores on the way). But luxury isn't its only market, an entire new startup and innovation community is on the rise. A speaker at the event, [Matt Haggman](#), [The Knight Foundation](#) program director for Miami believes, "A strong startup culture is grounded in the belief that it will reap important community benefits, creating: a stronger sense of place and possibility, increased talent retention and a greater network of diverse problem-solvers." He believes communities can achieve this by connecting innovators to talented workers, resources and capital investment.

### **Lessons from Newark**

Devastated by de-industrialization and race riots, Newark fell into a seeming death spiral of abandonment and decline in the 1960s. But now it is on the rebound. Donors have contributed \$43 million toward matching Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg's \$100-million gift to the city's school system, and \$15 billion was allocated to revamp Newark Liberty Airport. [Don Katz](#), the CEO of [Audible.com](#), the world's largest producer and purveyor of downloadable audio books, moved his company's operations to Newark in 2007; Panasonic followed in 2013. Katz says, "With an influx of tech-driven, job growth economy companies, neighborhoods can bloom--measurable social and economic indications of that include increased residential in-migration and foot traffic, and the growth of vibrant street level amenities can be achieved. Other cities can emulate Detroit by attracting and bringing together engineers, artists and other knowledge workers to create positive urban change.

### **Lessons from Queens, NY**

Queens has one of the most diverse communities in the world. [Coalition for Queens](#) aims to tap into its creativity to build a hub for high-tech (and high-paying jobs). A "creative on-ramp,"

C4Q's Access Code is building a new talent pipeline into the tech community that "is inclusive of all New Yorkers, regardless of race, gender or economic background."

### **Lessons from Endeavor Global**

Hailed by New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman as "the best anti-poverty program of all," New York City-based [Endeavor](#) seeks out the most promising entrepreneurs in Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. With support from Endeavor's worldwide mentor network, its protégés have created more than 400,000 jobs at 650 companies, generating \$6.8 billion in revenues.

### **Lessons from Toronto**

Once a byword for boring and provincial, Toronto now ranks as the fourth largest city in North America. With its thriving economy, safe streets, and world-class medical and cultural intuitions, Toronto has become a magnet for immigrants, with a population that is among the most ethnically and culturally diverse in the world.

### **Lessons from Las Vegas**

Entrepreneur and venture capitalist Tony Hsieh sold Zappos to Amazon.com in 2009 for \$1.2 billion and moved its headquarters from Silicon Valley to downtown Las Vegas, committing \$350 million of his own money to transform the neighborhood into a startup ecosystem. Seedy check-cashing operations and pawnshops have been replaced with hipster bars, restaurants, and co-working spaces, and new apartment buildings are rising. But are deep pockets and enthusiasm enough to create a new Silicon Valley?



[CREATE: Detroit](#) takes place on Tuesday, June 30th at the College for Creative Studies and space is limited. [Tickets are on sale now.](#)

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