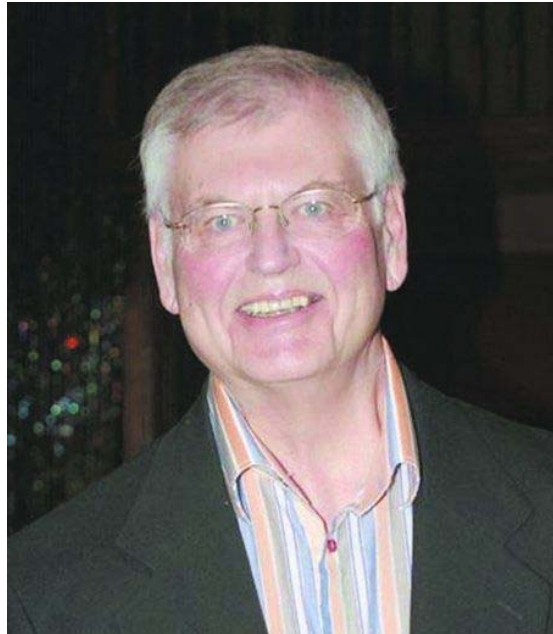


Gord Hume's new book says cities need big, bold plans to attract and keep young entrepreneurs



By Patrick Maloney, The London Free Press
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That sound municipal politicians are hearing — or, at least, should be hearing — is a wake-up call, says the new book by a former longtime London city council member.

In *10 Trends For Smarter Communities*, politician-turned-author Gord Hume details what he believes is the expanding horizon city councils must consider — and it goes way beyond bylaws and backyard chickens.

“It’s a very complex municipal world out there,” Hume said in an interview. “The simple reality is that . . . local government is now the most important level of government because it deals with everyday things on the street.

“The point now is that cities around the world are becoming so tremendously important.”

Not that they weren’t always — it’s long been said cities are the engine of a nation’s economy — but the responsibility and opportunity now sits more than ever with municipal councils to move their cities ahead.

Or to let them get left behind.

“When young people graduate, they want two things — a great job and a great city. Boundaries don’t mean that much to them,” Hume said. “(So) it’s up to the municipality to create a dynamic, vibrant city that will attract young entrepreneurs.”

In Canada, the so-called municipal infrastructure gap — that space between repairs that are needed, and those that can be afforded — is holding all cities behind, Hume said.

Worldwide, he’s seen cities being built on a green, high-tech, sustainable foundation with modern technology. In China, he rode a train that went 431 km/h. Imagine that running from London to Toronto?

But these are big-picture issues, Hume said, and many cities elect politicians unable to grasp them. Not to pick on London, which he argues has excellent strengths, but such examples are here.

“Right now, we’re tinkering. There’s no big, bold plan,” Hume said. “We’ve got big-city issues that require big answers.”

Hume’s book is available online at municipalworld.com.

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