

# FOREWORD

*Developing Living Cities* represents a remarkably ambitious enterprise: Singapore, a city-state that over the last half-century has achieved great distinction in promoting a distinctive vision of high-quality urban development, has taken a conscious decision to benchmark itself against other cities that have achieved similar successes, and to invite independent academic experts to conduct and present the analyses. The results are presented in these pages. They offer rich rewards to any serious student of international urbanism and urban planning, in two important regards.

First, these chapters offer extraordinarily convenient summary in-depth reviews of comparative urban performance and the key elements that contribute to it. But they do much more than regurgitate numbers: they provide detailed statistics, and question the results. Second, some chapters examine the Singapore achievement in greater depth, employing useful pairwise comparisons with similar island or city-state economies (e.g. Hong Kong, Honolulu) to tease out the precise differences and the reasons underlying them.

Complete with rich analytical details, the chapters attempt at something that is increasingly important both for academic students of urbanism and to professional practitioners: they establish ways in which we can gauge the comparative performance of the world's great cities and the key factors that underpin that performance. Singapore, in its ceaseless quest for excellence, has constantly sought to do this. Now, it shares its understanding with the wider urban world — for which our thanks are due.

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