



'Creative Class' author Richard Florida: Region should stop blaming Detroit



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DETROIT, MI -- Richard Florida, author of "The Rise of the Creative Class" gushed over the city's Downtown-area growth and urged regional transit development in a speech at the [Detroit Policy Conference on Thursday](#).

Florida was the morning keynote speaker in the conference being held at Motor City Casino Hotel.

He said 35 percent of the Detroit-area's workforce is a part of what he calls the "creative class" - scientists, technologists, artists, designers, managers, health care and education workers - a larger portion than the national average.

He said that number is over 50 percent in parts of Detroit's core Downtown-area, and up to 75 to 80 percent in some suburban areas. Ann Arbor, he said, ranks fifth nationally in creative class concentration.

"But it's not enough," he said. "One of the key things we have to do forward, is lift up everyone and understand that creativity not only come from the great software engineer, the great information technologist, the musician who's made it. But it comes from - what place knows this better -- it comes from the bottom, it comes from working class kids."

He said transit, diversity, service industry innovation and nurturing urban spaces with vibrant street life are key to spreading the success of the creative economy in Detroit.

"There's much you've accomplished here -- a city whose Downtown comeback is amazing," he said. "You need to connect this region's hubs of activity through a transit strategy."

"... You need to cooperate as a region. The city-suburb thing has to go away. If I hear it again in the suburbs, I'm going to start screaming... I blame the suburbs. When you say the city is the problem. They're not the problem. You're the problem."

More from the conference:

-With emergency manager on the way, Mayor Dave Bing comments on debt exaggeration claims

-State economic development official: It has to get easier for businesses to open in Detroit

-Rock Ventures CEO Matt Cullen on making Detroit an attractive place to 'live, work and play'

-Opening date of Whole Foods in Midtown Detroit to be announced Friday

-Rock Ventures CEO: Downtown Detroit's Greektown Casino-Hotel area 'can be a lot more vibrant'

-Rock Ventures to host design contest for building at Hudson's site in Downtown Detroit

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