

**CONTACT:**

April Young  
Coordinator, Media Relations  
713-844-3641 - Phone  
713-858-8772 – Mobile

Kimberley Baker  
Manager, Media Relations  
713-844-3638 – Phone  
832-657-3119 - Mobile

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**June 5, 2007**

## ***U.S. cities better off focused on opportunities for all than catering to elites***

**HOUSTON**— The city of Houston, along with Phoenix, Dallas, Atlanta and Charlotte, offer America's most compelling model for urban greatness, a new study finds.

The study, "Opportunity Urbanism: An Emerging Paradigm For the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," finds that these cities, more than any others, will be successful because they are approaching the future with a mind to providing broad-base opportunities for the masses rather than simply catering to the elite.

"A region's ability to create jobs, offer affordable housing and present entrepreneurial openings to a growing and highly diverse population is the surest sign of urban vibrancy and viability," said the study's primary author, urban scholar Joel Kotkin, who released the study's findings today in Houston at an event sponsored by the Greater Houston Partnership.

Conducted with The Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland Institute at Texas Southern University and California's La Jolla Institute, the study provides a counterpoint to the current fad in development circles that focus primarily on luring affluent, well-educated "creative elites" as the key to a successful urban strategy.

In the new study, Kotkin argues that although some cities --- notably Boston and San Francisco as well as parts of New York and Los Angeles --- may prosper with such an elite-oriented approach, the vast majority of America's cities would do best by focusing on creating opportunities for broad ranks of their residents.

His theory establishes that one of the primary historic roles of cities has been to nurture and grow a middle class in order to be an engine of upward social mobility.

Kotkin says the metropolitan regions of Houston, Phoenix, Dallas, Atlanta and Charlotte best typify this approach. He predicts they are likely to be the kind of places that can accommodate the estimated 100 million new Americans expected over the next 40 years.

The Greater Houston Partnership, which provided funding for the study, sees it as a blueprint for the growth. Armed with this study's information, business leaders have created a \$40 million fund to bring more jobs and greater economic opportunity to all Houstonians.

**Editor's Note:** Click [here](#) to read the complete study.

**About the author:** Joel Kotkin is an internationally-recognized authority on global, economic, political and social trends. He is the author of the critically acclaimed book, *THE CITY: A GLOBAL HISTORY* from Modern Library. It has been published in China, Spain, Great Britain and the British Commonwealth. Editions in Japanese and Korean are planned for later this year. He is also author of the widely best-selling title, *THE NEW GEOGRAPHY*, How the Digital Revolution is Reshaping the American Landscape (Random House, 2000). Currently he is writing a book for Penguin Publishers on the American future which will look at how the nation will evolve in the next four decades. In July, 2007 he will become a Presidential Fellow at the Hobbs Institute at Chapman



University in southern California. Kotkin is a highly respected speaker and futurist. He consults for many leading economic development organizations, private companies, regions and cities in the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe.

**About the Greater Houston Partnership:** The Greater Houston Partnership is the primary advocate of the Houston-area business community and is dedicated to building regional economic prosperity. It represents 10 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller. With more than 2,000 member organizations, the Partnership represents approximately one fourth of the region's workforce. Visit the Greater Houston Partnership at [www.houston.org](http://www.houston.org).