

## Building Brookfield

**An Interview with Ric Clark,  
Senior Managing Partner and Chairman, Brookfield Property Group  
and Chief Executive Officer, Brookfield Properties**

**EDITORS' NOTE** Ric Clark has been with Brookfield and its predecessors since 1984 in various senior roles, including Chief Executive Officer of Brookfield Property Group, Brookfield Property Partners, and Brookfield Office Properties. Clark serves as a director on several of Brookfield's real estate affiliate company boards, including Chairman of Brookfield Property Partners, and board member of General Growth Properties and Canary Wharf. Clark holds a Bachelor of Science in Business from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania.



Ric Clark

**COMPANY BRIEF** Brookfield (Brookfield.com) is a leading global alternative asset manager with approximately \$250 billion of assets under management. They have a history of more than 100 years of owning and operating real assets with a focus on property, renewable energy, infrastructure, and private equity. Brookfield offers a range of public and private investment products and services, and is co-listed on the New York, Toronto, and Euronext stock exchanges.

### What is the secret to the success for Brookfield?

We have performed pretty well over the past few economic cycles and believe there are a number of reasons for this: our culture, which is deliberately collaborative, plays a big part – from the people that we hire to our open seating plan to the way we work – it's all about sharing information and working together to maximize performance; second, strategy is important – real estate is a cyclical business and to be able to navigate those cycles, having a well-founded strategy is essential; third, we believe that having the ability to understand the assets, sectors, and markets from the ground up is hugely important. To do that, we've made substantial investments in operating platforms in almost all property sectors. Finally, we always ensure a strong alignment of interests with those who invest with us by making a significant investment alongside our partners – in most instances we have more equity at stake than our investors.

### As you continue to grow and bring people in, is culture fit critically important?

Culture is even more important as we expand around the world. It's a challenge, but

to address this we focus on bringing in bright, promising young professionals early in their careers and putting them through our training and rotational program. We also look for people that grew up in markets where we want to invest. Once trained, we send them home to be major contributors to our businesses. This all helps with exporting the culture.

### Where do you see the real estate market today, starting in New York?

New York remains one of the most important markets in the world. It's the first, second, or third market on almost every international investor's hit list with a strong diverse economy driven by a young, dynamic work force; it's not only a great place to work but a great place to live.

There has been a large migration of new technology tenants to New York. It also continues to be the most important center of international business and finance, and we don't see that changing in the near term. All of this creates growth and great investment opportunities.

The bulk of our investments are focused in the world's most dynamic and resilient markets. For example, we're a significant investor in London, and we have a meaningful presence in Berlin, Sydney, Toronto, and Calgary.

Most developed country markets continue to perform well, with the exception of those whose economies are driven by the energy and natural resources sectors – like Houston, Calgary, and Perth. Low energy prices have put a drag on those markets, which we expect to persist for a while.

Although we have a positive long-term view on Brazil, it is in a recession right now. We are a meaningful investor in Brazil and, from what we're seeing in our various local businesses, there are small positive signs that the market may be bottoming out and turning the corner.

### Is it hard to find the large-scale, complex projects for which Brookfield is known?

The world's economy is largely driven by the 20s/30s cohort, the millennials. As a result, we have spent a great deal of time observing how they work and what makes them most productive. Over the past several years, we have been building or acquiring large mixed-use urban projects such as Brookfield Place and Manhattan West in New

York. Our goal with these large projects is to create an environment that helps employers attract, retain, and motivate top talent. Millennials seem to want to shift from work to play at a moment's notice and at unconventional hours, so our places combine great office space with great retail and amenities, arts programs, great housing within our complex or nearby, and close proximity to transportation.

We're unique in that we have this great collection of assets, all with very specific attributes. All of our international tenants from around the world know that if they're in a Brookfield Place in New York, Dubai, or Perth, it's the same kind of experience.

### From a community engagement perspective, how important is it that your employees focus on giving back?

It's a major focus of ours – from participating in charities and facilitating the great work of charities within our complexes to providing a free arts program to animate our public spaces for the tenants and local communities.

### Is the economic impact of real estate well understood, and can more be done to get that message out?

The most successful cities certainly recognize the important role that real estate plays. Where there is a great partnership between the public and private sector in developing, renovating, and stimulating a city, there is a great city.

### What do you tell young people who want to build a career in real estate?

I tell them to seek out an organization that invests in developing young people through training programs that will expose them to a broad spectrum of real estate disciplines, sectors, and geographies so they can see multiple aspects of the industry. Along the way, they will figure out where their interests are. It will also make them a more well-rounded real estate professional.

### When you joined Brookfield, if someone would have said that 30-plus years later this is where you would have spent your career, would you have agreed?

I have been fortunate to be with a business that started with +/- 3 billion of real estate assets under management and has grown to over \$150 billion. It has been a lot of fun for me to see different aspects of it and to grow with the business. We've been through a lot – and we have not only survived, but thrived, because of a great group of people. ●