

4.10.08

CLEVELAND BRAINSTORM

What are the major problems/issues facing our cities?

- Inferiority Complex
- Lost sense of 'urban' identity (no walking)
- Deficit focus; Redundancy of Service
- Lack Vision as a whole (specifically leadership)
- Reactionary (Confused about relationship)
- Don't use lakefront
- Public School System
- Exodus of Talent
- Keep assets a city (sell the wrong stuff)
- Competition of Perspective
- Lack of Mobility in City (public transit)
- Segregation along racial and economic divides
- Continuous barrage of negative portrayal of the City in the Media
- Lack of Economic Diversity
- Perception of Cleveland (from Suburbs to Inner City, between old and Young)
- Fragmentation, Lack of Unity
- No change of the guard in leadership

Personal Experience with Problem

"Public transit, people can't believe it, why? It's okay.
People don't know how to utilize networks that exist within the city.
People in our cities don't even want to try. Why are you moving there?
What's wrong with you for doing what your doing?
FEAR?
People don't even want to consider coming back.
When you move back, talk well of the city.
Have to get over the hump of defending the city.
People can't even believe that you do what you do. People talk who don't even know about our city and that still hate and don't understand.
Once we can actually get people here they love the place. We can blow people away.

Public Policy Problems/Political implications/Hurdles

Regionally, people are afraid to 'share'. Those who have the ideas are miles from those who make decisions. Those who have the power have given up on the urban core. People from the bottom are those who believe.
Major shortage of young who are interested in taking on political positions. They are there but there is not enough. If you're not born in a ward, there are barriers to leadership for you. There is a lot of inclusive policy in this city.
The entire candidate pull is never interview and displayed for the candidates to vote on.
Once in power, people often forget.
Too much looking at what other cities are doing, trying to be like other cities. We don't want to do things if it doesn't work in another city. Too comfortable with other cities. Too much nostalgia.
Generational gap is huge in the city. The old and the new school don't feel comfortable around each other. It's not a relay race.

Solutions, People- who is doing it right?

- How do we effectively challenge the status quo. Step up and do what you have to do.
- Have to have a voice and kick people out who are not doing their jobs.
- Political leaders are reflective of our political jurisdictions. We need more integrated diverse neighborhoods. Population shift is key.
- Get people in the city again is going to be key. Most attractive neighborhoods have to be integrated.
- Slowly wins the race, we are doing things slowly to make these moves right.
- There needs to be a sense of urgency about the things, more militant about things that need to get done. We have to be those agents of change.
- We have to bring people in that have misconceptions and show them how great this city is.
- We need to engage people in voting.
- We have to get the media to cover the GOOD with the bad. Give things an honest review.
- We have to look at the city and the state. We have to get away from the anti-urbanism
- We have to show our assets and make sure that they are abundant
- Make ourselves the leaders again. We have the infrastructure to do what we need to do. Make leadership us our assets in the right way.
- If you don't live in the city, promote the city, support the city, talk the city up.
- Promote lifestyle, all the assets the city has to offer.

REPLY FROM DETROIT

Sounded almost exactly like what we wrote - we're a bit inspired by the fact that we share these problems...

We have different pol system but similar political situation (at-large v. ward-based council); our political leadership are often as entrenched - it's not producing different results

To us, that's about the accessibility of political power. Money, access to people w/power, etc. Can the internet challenge this notion? Create avenues to power? Go mainstream...

We also have problems of generation gap and lack of collaboration b/t young and old; one suggestion is arrange in-person meetings - older generation not comfortable w/o face-to-face communication.

Take a look at the D brand initiative - idea is to infiltrate the media from the bottom up.

We also think culture shift needs to happen in the suburbs, not just the city - the perceptions need to change there regarding the city.

Deal there and w/in city w/homeowners' legacy; fear of some integration (on all sides) as potential to take away something that has been defended for years and years.

Experience a lack of long-term thinking - politically, socially - leaders, media need to communicate/educate about civic participation - sacrifice a little short-term for long-term community benefit. One idea: the key here is talking about families, family values, keeping families together - can tie this to attraction and retention of young talent - if young talent have left b/c they can't find jobs here.

The new progressive leaders need to still talk about hard work, middle-class values, family values... speak the same language of the old guard to talk about our new issues.

You didn't mention jobs - but we imagine you suffer that problem (lack of jobs)

Resources for people who do want to move back - what is the new cool neighborhood? Can we localize people moving back to build critical mass in particular neighborhoods?

Need to focus our efforts