

4.10.08 DETROIT BRAINSTORM

Problems:

Attitude - own worst enemies, city vs. suburbs, only see the negatives, city dwellers ripping on the city and want to get out,

Economy

Perception - local perception of ourselves and national perception of our city

Structural - leadership, long term financial structures that are sucking the money out of the city, state tax system and how we collect property taxes to fund the city, taxes work against us when we are in good times, by the time you get in bad times it is difficult to get out of the hole, city and state not working together to create the infrastructure changes that we need, structural problem in the political system as well

Disconnect between organizations and individuals - great documents and ideas for no initiatives, lack of cohesiveness, fighting for credit over the importance of making change, how do things work and how can we make change,

Education - residences don't know where to go to make change or get help, empowering the people with knowledge, not educating the next generation about how we arrived here in our current situation, need better civic education,

Health - we are struggling to just get by and get food on the table, food and home first before making things better. **"To much frosting, not enough cake"**,

Tradition - keeping us from thinking of new ideas, new ways of living, stubborn about change, can't see how things that work for other cities will work for our city, fear of change,

Politics - politicians choose who they are accountable for, the government needs to help empower the people,

Solutions:

Need a new language - we constantly revert to a language that doesn't fit here in our city, we struggle with the words that we want to use,

Use the cultural institutions to drive spending and visitors in and to the city, stimulate the economy,

Keep the talent here. Find ways to put their energies into the city and not take them away, show other cities that there are good things coming out of Detroit by having the talent visit other cities and not move there away from our city,

Look at our assets - build on the assets as opposed to playing the victim

Needs assessment -

Connect the dots - focus on creating a network, connect the youth with the elders,

Volunteers through retirees - capitalizing on knowledge and experience of elders,

Overcome racial barriers especially with older suburbs, educate what is a city and the diversity of cultures that makes it great, we have an opportunity to look to the city as a place to live and play,

Community - create parks and public places,

What Would A Healthy Detroit Look Like in 10 Years?

Strong local economy + marrying 21th century manufacturing and technological prowess w/new economy, marriage of past and present; -public spaces where people come together, lack of negative reaction/feeling about being from Detroit.

REPLY FROM TOLEDO

Hello Detroit!

Our cities have a lot in common in terms of transitioning from 20th century manufacturing to 21st century global industries. We also struggle with the perception of our city, and infighting.

One idea that was discussed in our meeting that we thought would be interesting to investigate more is how the Denver metro area mass transit plan might be able to offer guidance to a combined mass transit plan for the Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Toledo areas. Perhaps with a light rail connecting airports, as well.

Thanks!