MOVING MICHIGAN FORWARD

thought leaders
helping the state
develop strategies

special report

October 4, 2013

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Land Policy Institute

BY

THE LAND POLICY INSTITUTE AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Editor

Dr. John D. Warbach
Professor and Associate Director, Land Policy Institute, MSU

Student Interviewers from Michigan State University

Karli Anderson
Environmental Studies and Agriscience

Brad Beck
Urban and Regional Planning

Trixi Ayahr Beeker
Adjunct Environmental Science Faculty, Lansing Community College

Bobby Busley
Urban and Regional Planning

Kat Clear
Environmental Studies and Agriscience

Erika Doroghazi
Environmental Studies and Agriscience

Michael R. French
Urban And Regional Planning

Kevin Gill
Urban And Regional Planning

Alex Iseler
Urban And Regional Planning

Matt Jamnik
Economics

Samantha Kaplan
Environmental Studies and Agriscience

Brandon Kawalec
Environmental Studies and Agriscience

Michelle LeBlanc
Urban And Regional Planning

Melinda McIntosh
Urban and Regional Planning

Chad Rossiter
Environmental Studies and Agriscience

Mark Sleeman
Arts and Humanities

Jessica Watkins
Environmental Studies and Agriscience

Front cover photo caption: Young business people in a meeting.

This report #2013–MMF–03 is part of the MSU Smart Growth and Strategic Land Use Decision-Making Course Special Report Series. Each report in the series features student interviews of national, international or statewide thought leaders on such topics as economic development, land use, the environment, urban design, government and social justice, with the goal of identifying strategies and finding opportunities to help improve Michigan's economy and prosperity.

Table of Contents

Introduction

BACKGROUND

For a long time, Michigan has chased its economic past, relying largely on manufacturing, mostly related to the auto industry. There are an increasing number of voices from within and outside the state that say we can no longer do that. There are now different drivers of prosperity, requiring us to embrace new strategies, including diversifying the state's economy, making our places attractive to people, and leveraging the human, cultural and natural assets that make Michigan unique in sustainable ways. We may not be able to create a recovery that lasts if we do not make our communities places that are magnets for people and economic activity—something that we did not do much of in the past. Fortunately, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder is leading an effort to make Michigan places magnets for talent attraction and to diversify the economy.

It has been difficult for the state to adopt a mindset change, in part, because it is simply difficult for people to change their basic values and world views. An additional reason we are not embracing change is that currently we have not identified an "enemy" to fight, as we did during the two World Wars and the efforts to contain communism, and we have become complacent . Yet it remains true that the success we achieved following a path set a century ago has run its course. For the past 50 years, the state has needed to embrace a new path, but has not moved far enough along on that course. We still can, and there are many people, such as those interviewed for this report, who have astutely observed what we could and should do differently. As we develop a clear and progressive narrative, it will be easier for Michigan's people and leaders to develop, adopt and pursue more productive policies and strategies.

Fortunately, the state, the nation and the globe are blessed with perceptive and articulate thought leaders in the private,

Downtown Grand Rapids during ArtPrize in 2012.

nonprofit and government sectors, who are involved in economic development, land use, the environment and society; and who track global, national, regional and local trends. The observations and ideas for the future of Michigan from a number of thought leaders are captured in this publication. These ideas are pertinent to places outside of Michigan as well. Many of these leaders are pioneers in that they saw the big picture early and connected land use and land strategies to many of the issues that face society. Other civic leaders in Michigan should pay attention to their contributions, as the state seeks to move the economy forward, especially in its most distressed places. Economic progress will require the implementation of strategies grounded in the context of the New Economy, globalization, a "flat world," knowledge industries and the concentration of economic activity in the most vibrant places where they will stick. Students also need to pay attention, as they are expected to become the leaders of the future in increasingly challenging times.

THOUGHT LEADERS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS PIECE

As part of a recent MSU course in land use policy, thought leaders provided important information that Michigan could use to: Identify how to recognize the mistakes we have made and then to move our thinking forward, including making places that will attract people and economic growth; working together at the regional level; and working to restore Detroit, the success of which is necessary for Michigan to restore itself.

Thought leaders contributing to this piece include:

- Robert Anderson, Director of the City of Detroit's Department of Planning and Development.
- Joe Borgstrom, Director of the Downtown and Community Service Division for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.
- Brad Garmon, Director of Conservation and Emerging Issues at the Michigan Environmental Council.
- Ben Hecht, President and CEO of Living Cities, a philanthropic collaborative.
- Eugene Jones, President and CEO of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and former Executive Director of the Detroit Housing Commission.
- Peter Kageyama, Co-Founder and Producer of the Creative Cities Summit and Author of "For the Love of Cities."
- Philip Lauri, Creative Director of Detroit Lives!
- Alece Montez, Senior Associate of Rocky Mountain Projects for the Orton Family Foundation in Denver, CO.

- Julie Powers, CTA, Executive Director of the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council.
- William (Bill) Rustem, Director of Strategic Policy for Michigan's Governor Rick Snyder.
- Jeff Smith, Co-Director of the New Economy Division of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP Inc.), and Project Manager of the Technology Innovation Center for the City of East Lansing.
- Sarah Szurpicki, Co-Founder and Director of the Great Lakes Urban Exchange.
- Rachael Franks Taylor, Director of Coastal Conservation for The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Michigan Chapter.
- James van Ravensway, Instructor in the School of Planning, Design and Construction at Michigan State University; and former Planning Director for the City of East Lansing.
- Dayne Walling, Mayor of the City of Flint.
- Gilbert White, Land Use Policy and Placemaking Consultant.
- Dan Wyant, Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and former President of the Edward Lowe Foundation.

This report is the third volume in the Moving Michigan Forward series. It may be helpful to read the first two volumes, each of which present the observations and ideas of different thought leaders. Interview subjects in the first two volumes raised many of the same basic observations as presented here, but the fact that a different set of sources coming from different perspectives echo the ideas of placemaking, regionalism and the attention that needs to be paid to rescuing Detroit gives extra weight to those ideas. The previous volumes are available online (see page 47 for more details).

Moving Michigan Thinking Forward

"The best way to revitalize the economy is to attract young talent and engage in the New Economy," said William (Bill) Rustem, Director of Strategy for Michigan's Governor Rick Snyder. Rustem continues, "We are below the national average of the percentage of population that possesses college degrees and that knowledge is power. He also indicated that The Detroit News conducted a poll about six years ago that determined only 23% of parents thought that a college education was essential to their children's success. In a follow-up poll conducted just a few years ago, only 33% of parents believed that a college education was essential for their children's success.

"The best way to revitalize the economy is to attract talent and engage in the New Economy." Bill Rustem

A simple fact of life is that the Old Economy is just that, old, and the manufacturing jobs typical of the last century are not coming back. The New Economy is now the king. Leaders need to help the public understand what is really important, then work on molding the public will to embrace the here and now; and that is how you get things done.

To illustrate that there are positives and to shift away from the negatives, Rustem mentioned Traverse City and Marquette as two cities that are using planning and their asset strengths to further enhance their images and promote the small towns. "Traverse City is a model city for the cooperation of the government and public working together to form a cohesive relationship for the betterment of all parties," he said. Rustem also stated that "Marquette has been called the 2nd or 3rd best rated place in America to hunt and fish, which further reinforces their identity as a destination for outdoor activities and fun."

Bill Rustem

DIRECTOR,
STRATEGIC POLICY FOR
MICHIGAN'S GOVERNOR
RICK SNYDER

Dan Wyant, President of the Edward Lowe Foundation and former Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, has quite a few ideas on how to move the state forward, though he insists, "There is no single answer to all of our state's problems. We have many separate issues, and there is no simple solution; we have to tackle things one at a time." Wyant has some high hopes for Michigan both environmentally and economically.

Dan Wyant

DIRECTOR, MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY; AND FORMER PRESIDENT, THE EDWARD LOWE FOUNDATION

Michigan is not without its obstacles though. According to Wyant, "Michigan is facing plenty of challenges. The main challenges we're facing is lack of leadership and many missed opportunities. We need to start at the community level with community leaders and local leaders and take a more regional approach and asset map the state's strengths and weaknesses. We have to combine the development of land use, as well as entrepreneurial growth."

There have been great signs of hope, but many challenges face Michigan too. The lost decade is commonly referred to by economists as a period of great economic turmoil for the country, but Dan Wyant believes it went beyond economic turmoil. "During this time, urban sprawl moved far out into the countryside and the state's 'appetite for large rural lots' reached an all-time high along with the loss of farmland, resources and serious habitat disturbance. Some purposeful policy set in place has been farmland preservation programs and urban revitalization programs, as well as water quality policies. However, much still must be done to make up for the lost decade," he said.

"We need to start at the community level with community leaders and local leaders and take a more regional approach and asset map the state's strengths and weaknesses." Dan Wyant

According to Wyant, the Great Lakes are something Michigan should be proud of; they are an excellent tourist attraction; they give Michigan the extremes of all four seasons; they provide a habitat for many diverse species; and, perhaps most importantly, they ensure that Michigan will not run into issues with water shortages. "Many states in America are not this lucky. There are real problems with droughts and water sanctioning in hotter parts of the country. It has been suggested that the Great Lakes be diverted and we 'share the wealth' with the areas of the United States that aren't as blessed with aquatic resources," he said. In Wyant's opinion the lakes could not handle being shared among other states. "Water levels have already been dropping, and diverting the lakes to share the water with other parts of the country will deplete that resource even more to a point where there will have been irreversible damage. Water scarcity is certainly a big problem, but I think other solutions should be tested before we jump to diverting the Great Lakes," he continues.

Wyant favors the passage of a tri-faceted conservation initiative. The first facet would involve water quality improvement,

specifically with respect to nonpoint source pollution and preventing runoff from working lands. The second part of that policy would be to speed up the redevelopment of urban areas, as well as hurry the clean-up of brownfield contaminate sites where no responsible parties are left to handle that clean up. The third portion of that policy would be place-based. "Michigan needs to work to become more likeable, walkable and usable," Wyant asserted. This will create a more tourist friendly environment.

While the three-part conservation initiative sounds focused on the environment, the economy would also benefit. "In terms of economic growth and improved environmental quality, there can't be one without the other. Without economic opportunity, we won't be able to provide environmental opportunity and without environmental quality, quality issues relating to air and water, will lead to health concerns," said Mr. Wyant.

Common, long-held views and beliefs are now under reconsideration, according to Peter Kageyama, Co-Founder and Producer of the Creative Cities Summit and Author of "For the Love of Cities." This reconsideration is being forced by things like the economic recession and an aging population. Kageyama believes that municipal leadership needs to be more flexible and adaptive in their thinking going forward. "The playbook needs to be changed," he said. "Many cities and organizations are now trying to accommodate everyday citizens that want to help but on their own terms. These alternative players are stepping up

Pedestrians waiting for orders outside at a taco truck.

and filling gaps where needed." Kageyama provided the example of people boarding up abandoned houses or mowing the grass at a park. "While these things are technically illegal the actions are needed—and wanted. Smart cities are looking the other way and letting these actions happen. Cities are walking the line between the official rules and creating space for citizens to act," he said. Kageyama thinks that cities are trying to create a balance between the rules and the overall objective of a better city.

There are many proponents for attracting creative people to cities. However, Kageyama noted, "Creative people are not just artists, but all of us are innovative and entrepreneurial. Cities are fueled by their people, and creative, entrepreneurial people have an exponential impact on their community. They create new businesses, new opportunities, new things for others," he continued.

"Cities are fueled by their people, and creative, entrepreneurial people have an exponential impact on their community." Peter Kageyama

The Honorable Dayne Walling, Mayor of the City of Flint, believes that the current challenge is "To maximize the personnel, technology and partnerships that are

Dayne Walling

MAYOR, CITY OF FLINT

available to our community to increase public safety." Flint has a police force that shrank in previous years. With a smaller police force, it is difficult to patrol a city the size of Flint, but crime has dropped this year nonetheless. Mayor Walling credits much of this drop to the resulting integrated efforts by law enforcement at local, State and federal levels. He also points to community involvement through neighborhood watch programs as being pivotal in better policing for residential areas. "The next step is to bring in the ShotSpotter technology to assist with gun violence reduction and criminal prosecution," Mayor Walling said about what is next for Flint's fight against crime. According to the website, ShotSpotter "Delivers the world's most powerful, most scalable, and most trusted gunshot detection solutions to local, state and federal agencies, governments and businesses all over the world." It is a system that is used to pinpoint gunfire and cut back on firearm-related violence.

Joblessness and crime are "mutually reinforcing," as Mayor Walling put it, they are issues that are best addressed by increasing job opportunities in Flint. As of 2010, the City had an unemployment rate of 23.2%. This figure may not completely represent the unemployment situation in Flint, because it only counts those who are seeking employment. Mayor Walling sees economic expansion through creating jobs as being the best long-term solution to fighting crime in Flint.

Mayor Walling's vision for the City of Flint is one that will be completed by planning. Flint is "engaging in the first comprehensive master planning process since the 1960's", he said. It has been granted funding of $1.5 million to work towards researching and developing a plan to guide the City. Flint is undergoing changes, from the ground up. Mayor Walling thinks that as the City evolves "you will see more compact urban environments created alongside of more open space." There is no doubt that Flint will soon see changes on top of what modifications it has already undergone. "In just a few years, there has been considerable change to the downtown area of Flint. It is impossible to see downtown Flint now, with bustling bars, restaurants, lofts and people filling the streets, and not compare it to the near desolation that filled it within even the last decade," he said. Mayor Walling sees many more changes coming soon in Flint and even thinks it may soon be a trailblazing city. Mayor Walling said, "Flint can be a city that breaks down traditional barriers between what is urban, suburban, rural and natural land uses to create a vibrant, diverse and unique living environment."

The concept of "shrinking cities" is something that is often featured in the news. Creating green space and functional areas by consolidating residential areas is one aspect of what is meant by shrinking. Mayor Walling does not subscribe to the

"Flint can be a city that breaks down traditional barriers between what is urban, suburban, rural and natural land uses to create a vibrant, diverse and unique living environment." Dayne Walling

concept of shrinking. He instead would like to "recycle" the city. Walling sees recycling the city as a plan that is composed of three parts: recycling, reuse and redevelopment. His plan is based around his belief that Flint has all the necessary tools to become a thriving city again, but must utilize them properly. Reusing brownfield sites, or vacant industrial lots, is a cornerstone of the plan. A quick drive through Flint and many of these sites are visible. According to the Genesee County Land Bank, around 32% of Flint has been abandoned, which is about 18,000 plots of land. They are the skeletons of Flint's manufacturing past. It can be challenging to find uses for these areas that is beneficial to the City.

Mayor Walling, in his 2010 speech to the James Madison College, gave his reasoning behind rejecting the idea of shrinking Flint: "I believe we experience places through value and quality, not through size." He does not see the City in numbers or in a map, but instead views it through the eyes of someone who has grown up there and connected with the City as more than a politician.

According to Mayor Walling, "Flint is working to attract a diverse group of students, workers and families into the City." The City's downtown improvement, which is the area that has seen the most change in recent years, may be mostly attributed to the University of Michigan-Flint. There has been an addition of student housing with more planned in the near future. The University of Michigan-Flint was ranked in 2010 as the public university with the fastest growth in the United States. Flint is also home to Kettering University—formerly General Motors Institute, a premier engineering school. Kettering University is located very near one of the major General Motors industrial areas in Flint. Mott Community College is the local community college that, along with University of Michigan-Flint and Kettering University, forms a broad campus along University Avenue. Third Street was renamed University Avenue just a few years ago in an attempt to foster a college atmosphere in the center of Flint. Higher education is a cornerstone of the plan to revitalize Flint.

Mayor Walling identifies the University of Michigan-Flint as an important asset, but also highlights a few areas that are necessary for the City to continue to improve to attract more students and others to the area. He acknowledges that Flint must be "more accommodating to pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation." This is a vital step in

Police safety patrol at crosswalk in a city in Michigan.

helping improve the attraction factor of the City. Look at downtown Flint on a holiday—such as St. Patrick's Day—when there is an event, such as Back to the Bricks, or even on a summer weekend night, and you will see the streets filled with people dining out and hitting the downtown bar scene. Flint has attracted a crowd on certain nights, but the next step is creating a more versatile attraction so that it may see crowds more often. Mayor Walling sees downtown Flint as "the beating heart of the Mid-Michigan region again."

Julie Powers, Executive Director of the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council (Mid-MEAC), notes that "maximizing land use (multi-story buildings, surrounded by parkland that doubles as stormwater treatment) is just good business sense. In virtually every study done about successful communities, residents cite a walkable/bikeable community "as a key factor in that success." Walk and Bike Lansing is a program sponsored by Mid-MEAC, which has worked wonders in increasing the river trail system throughout the Ingham County area, as well as other bike and pedestrian friendly progress.

According to Powers, "It is vital to foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place." She notes some uniquely Lansing features with which she and Mid-MEAC have been involved in including "the recent renewal in Downtown Lansing along the riverfront—we have a great City Market, a renovated major employer and the Capital City Dragon Boat Race."

Powers also said "It is important to preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas." She noted that this "requires bringing together leaders in housing, transportation, education, workforce development, environmental protection and more to ensure that we are planning for the future in an environmentally responsible way, while maximizing the resources of the region. I think regionalism is the key to future success." Furthermore, Mid-MEAC is running a couple of relevant programs called Adopt-A-River and Volunteer Stream Monitoring Programs. "The U.S. is not a homogenous society—we will always have agriculture, technology, service and other sectors that drive the need for multi-tiered planning systems, she said."

"It is important to preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas." Julie Powers

Powers extols the importance of green transportation and maximizing efficiency via making it possible for "more people to walk, bike, use public transit and telecommute to work and school." Also, Mid-MEAC provides a Smart Commute Program where local individuals and business groups can register their smart commute miles to win an annual recognition.

While there have been many profound changes of land use in the United States, Brad Garmon, Director of Conservation and Emerging Issues at the Michigan Environmental Council, believes that two drivers, 1) the invention of the automobile, and 2) the implementation of large-scale, mechanized agriculture shaped the change

Brad Garmon

**DIRECTOR,
CONSERVATION AND EMERGING ISSUES,
MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL**

we have experienced. "The automobile changed land use in America. The country was quickly redesigned around the car. People began to move farther out of cities and towns, and into more remote, homogenous and more auto-dependent suburbs and exurbs leading to a segregated use of land that, in turn, changed the entire approach to land," he said.

According to Garmon, "Mechanized agriculture similarly allowed people to become disconnected from the land and environment they depend on. Mechanized agriculture allowed farmers to farm more land in less time with fewer people, but in the process most people also lost the connection they once had with the land and with food production, which disconnected them from their local land, local farmers, and local environment. The technological advance in agriculture enabled changes in land use and conversions of prime farmland to development that might not have happened otherwise."

Garmon continued, "Policy and related public investments played a large part in these transformations and changes in land use. The interstate highway system, for example, was a purposeful project to compensate for the increasing number of vehicles in the United States, but it had a very profound influence on land use and brought about unforeseen consequences, such as the declining of commercial property values and commercial activity in the downtowns of cities, due to the reduction of people and traffic in and through them. This is a perfect example of how the interstate system worked in many ways exactly as it was supposed to, but had unintended negative consequences, too."

Garmon believes that transportation has played a large role in how American cities have been built, and how land has been managed. He also believes that, in Michigan, planning for transportation provides a great opportunity for the future of the state's communities. "In order to make Michigan cities attractive again and prosperous, leaders must focus on rebuilding cities around alternative modes of transportation, such as public bus systems or integrated rail systems," he said.

A statewide rail system in Michigan has picked up a lot of fans and is growing in popularity all over the state. One idea , which Garmon called "Recreating Hemmingway's Michigan," would focus on

Passengers boarding an Amtrak train.

providing rail service to northern Michigan communities again, seems promising, due to the amount of existing infrastructure around the state and the support from many northern communities where historically rail systems connected these communities, and where some of the basic rail infrastructure already exists.

"Michigan must also use its strengths to attract people," said Garmon. "Michigan has an incredible amount of exceptional forest, beaches, lakes and rivers that can be used to attract people. Recreation is valued highly by today's college graduates. They want to live in places where they can have adventures. Combining these adventures with a flourishing downtown district is the key to attracting people and retaining them," said Garmon. Such cities as Traverse City, Marquette and Alpena are perfect examples of cities that are investing in recreation and nature to attract people. Garmon feels that Michigan needs to work on access to these resources. "Michigan has tended to not open up waterfronts to communities as public areas. Many waterfronts in the state have been used for commercial activity and industrial building, rather than for offering public access. Industrial, residential or commercial development, if not well designed, can really limit the public's access and use of these assets," he continued. Garmon feels that waterfronts and nature are extremely valuable to Michigan and need to be carefully protected for public use or managed and designed in ways that allow public access to attract people. He believes that the protection of Michigan's natural resources is fundamental to the growth of the state.

"Recreation is valued highly by college graduates. They want to live in places where they can have adventures." Brad Garmon

According to Garmon, "Northern Michigan cities can attract people if the resources are protected and properly managed. However, a problem facing these cities is that they are located in rather rural areas, and the support network for people working in the emerging technology or creative marketplace and living there is much smaller than that for those who live in urban areas. An example is that if a person lives in Detroit and works at a marketing firm, he has a larger network to fall back on, because there are multiple marketing firms in the Detroit area. So if this person gets laid off or feels the need to change firms then it is relatively easier to do so." He continued, "However, a person who works at a marketing firm in Traverse City or another rural area does not have the same resources and access as the person from Detroit. Some people may acknowledge the risk and take it, because they value recreation and nature in close proximity to rural towns. However, some may also feel

that the risk is too great and live in urban areas where the support network in high-tech or creative fields is much bigger."

Garmon's vision of Michigan in the future is very bright, which includes a rethinking of the state's assets; its focus on access to fresh water, timber and fresh foods; and the increased protection of natural resources, a plan that allows Michigan to sustainably use its resources to attract people and grow economically, coupled with a comprehensive public transit system that will transport people to vibrant, diverse cities and vivid neighborhoods across the state in an easy and enjoyable way.

Joe Borgstrom

DIRECTOR, DOWNTOWN AND COMMUNITY SERVICE DIVISION, MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Joe Borgstrom is the Director of the Downtown and Community Service Division for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, which includes the Michigan Main Street Center. Its goal is to "Support downtowns and traditional commercial neighborhood districts by promoting and facilitating implementation of the Main Street Four-Point Approach® in communities across the state." The Program hopes to improve Michigan's communities and downtowns by promoting "environmentally sustainable redevelopment," integrating a "community's cultural assets," and encouraging "entrepreneurial development and downtown living."

Borgstrom believes that one of the messages that most leaders like about the Main Street Program is that it is mostly volunteer based. "Volunteers give a broad range of opinions and ways of doing things, because they are typically much more diverse than a group of professionals would be. Also, many volunteers are knowledgeable about the areas they are working on to improve. They usually have some tie to the community, giving them more incentive and knowledge to work successfully," he said. Borgstrom also believes that most community leaders like the accountability that the Program is able to provide. "Having a work plan that sets out the specifics on how to restore a city is an important tool to have and use. Many communities are not sure where they need to start when planning a transformation of the city. Michigan Main

"Volunteers give a broad range of opinions and ways of doing things, because they are typically much more diverse than a group of professionals would be." Joe Borgstrom

A Michigan Municipal League event reception held outside at the Lansing Center.

Street is able to be specific about ways that a downtown can be turned around," he continued.

Borgstrom believes that the biggest change we have experienced is the major halt in growth that we have recently experienced. "This halt," he said, "caused by the recent 'Great Recession,' has created a major challenge to our funding system, and has forced lending institutions and units of government to rethink costs and risks associated with development." Borgstrom continued, "More thought is given to how and why cities grow and are prosperous. We've seen developments not be able to pay for themselves related to infrastructure replacement costs, and development and prosperity have been greatly impacted because of this. The recession has opened our eyes to what happens when there is a 'pause' and brought an end to the 'grow at all costs, damn the consequences' approach to development." He said, "In the Old Economy, a cheap place to do business was important to the prosperity of a city or town. If the city was able to provide a cheap place for companies to do business, they would be able to attract companies and business, which would then attract people. In the New Economy, talent and ideas of people are important to the success and prosperity of cities. If the city is able to attract these talented people, the businesses will follow and then create a higher level of prosperity for the city."

Borgstrom emphasized the need to improve on the existing infrastructure of Michigan. He thinks it is important to evaluate projects based on their long-term costs to the city, because of the cost of maintaining infrastructure. "Return," according to Borgstrom, "will come from improving on assets and existing infrastructure." Michigan has a lot of existing infrastructure, so why not capitalize on this, rather than start from scratch and spend more money? He continues, "It is important to build on existing assets and resources to bring in resilient and sustainable growth. It will also bring in more talented people into the area who will hopefully help it grow from there." He also said, "It is important to have both economic and social opportunities

to make places that people really want to live in. Leaders have begun to realize that in order to get a fully prosperous and successful city, there is a great need for a great place. People, especially the talented class, are getting pickier about the places they live, picking the place first and trying to find work second. This supports the concept of 'placemaking' where the city focuses on what the people want out of it. For many places, this means dense, 'walkable' communities that are within close proximity of things to do. Michigan needs to make the placemaking concept a top priority when renovating a downtown."

Borgstrom thinks the biggest challenge that Michigan faces in the future is funding. "Money is always an issue. Businesses in Michigan are having trouble funding existing infrastructure, and taxing jurisdictions are losing money, which is not good for the state." According to Borgstrom, it will take "serious leadership to change the way we do things." He believes that it is important to stay on track for the new way of doing things and that there will be a temptation to go back to the old ways.

Gilbert White, Land Use Policy and Placemaking Consultant, said "Instead of going for the cheapest place to build, we should try for the most functional place to build. If something is functional and well-developed by a community it is more likely to be sustainable for a long period of time." White also stressed how hard it is to make general land use policies, because what works for one city or town will not be suitable for another. This is why there is a push for local movements in the state.

"... What works for one city or town will not be suitable for another. This is why there is a push for local movements in the state." Gilbert White

Gilbert White

LAND USE POLICY AND PLACEMAKING CONSULTANT

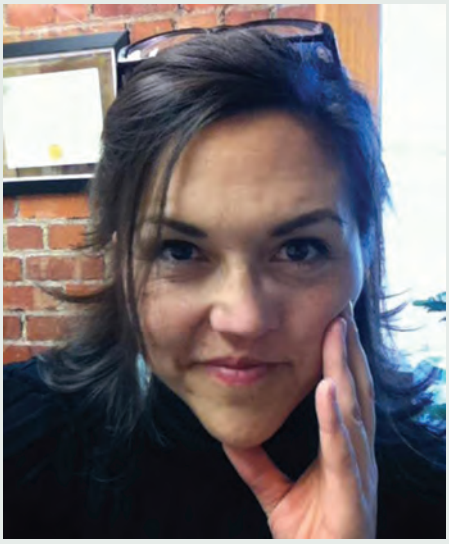
Over the past several years, White has been involved in a Land Policy Institute (LPI) study looking at the potential value that placemaking elements bring to residential home values. This survey also collected a variety of other personal information about the individual's age, financial situation, work and so forth, to make sure LPI was receiving opinions from all types of respondents who live in a community. He believes that the time is ripe for formulating and implementing placemaking strategies in communities across the state.

White believes that due to the recession, many people across the age demographics are stuck in place, "Baby Boomers who may want to move back into the city to enjoy new central urban communities find they cannot sell their homes to buy in the city, and are even being forced to work for more years to insure financial security in retirement."

According to White, the college-age generation is the "most stuck "of all and

will continue to get "more stuck" until the economy turns around. "After college this generation is so strapped with debt that they are often forced to move back home with their parents. When they eventually find a job, they are forced to stay at home for lack of a better option. Another segment of the college-age generation is choosing not to go to school at all, because they do not want to put themselves in debt. However, this option also limits them to their home area, likely in a lower paying job, due to a lack of a secondary education," he said.

White stressed that we must start local for movements to improve our communities, "Instead of just improving big cities that many people cannot move to, improve the small towns they live in as well." According to White, "What works for Traverse City will not work for Detroit or vice versa." Not only will working local make more people happy, it will bring the greatest rewards. "Placemaking is a great way to approach this. There is a role for top-down policies and practices, yet we need to acknowledge that the real 'experts' are the residents, and this requires an engagement and empowerment of citizens from the bottom up. At the end of the day, this is all about improving people habitat and moving away from our myopic pre-occupation with improving auto-habitat. Times have changed," he said. White indicated that someone once said, "Growth is not good or bad, but it has to go somewhere."



Alece Montez

**SENIOR ASSOCIATE,
ROCKY MOUNTAIN PROJECTS,
ORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION**

Alece Montez, Senior Associate of Rocky Mountain Projects for the Orton Family Foundation (OFF) in Denver (CO), has identified sprawl as a major contributor to land use problems today. She said, "We have spread out too far, and this sprawl has stretched our resources too thin. Sprawl has affected other aspects of our daily lives, including behavior, social capital and social constructs. People are now without neighbors in the traditional sense, because there is a lack of connection to each other and place. Sprawl decreases happen chance meeting." For example, Montez added, "Think of how much the online dating concept has grown. There was not online dating in the 70s, because you didn't need it. Society was more people-oriented, and there was plenty of opportunity to meet people. Now people rely on technology for interaction." She said, "Sprawl has changed the American dream. Gentrification may be happening,

but the mental constructs and patterns of sprawl continue to influence society."

According to Montez, "To successfully accommodate the change in flight from cities to flight to cities will require policy changes, which can be difficult for people to accept." She said, "But it always goes back to the way you frame the message. Sometimes you need a perfect alignment of different groups coming together. To do this, you must make your message meaningful for everyone involved, especially those adverse to the idea. Don't use generalized message techniques and messaging hoping it reaches everyone or that it reaches everyone in a way that makes sense or carries meaning; you need to be more specific with outreach and messaging."

To create connections, Montez suggested first analyzing your audience. She uses a community data analysis service and grassroots-type of community network analysis. This data service provides detailed information about the population. It tracks people by trends in activities and product purchases. It also provides an analysis of the methods people are using to get their information. This allows her to look at a town and identify ways to reach out to the community members specifically. The grassroots network analysis encourages people in a local community to identify who the missing voices are and the best ways to reach them. Again, universal tools and messaging don't reach everyone and who better than the community themselves to describe the best outreach tools. This type of information allows leaders to reach out to people on a human level and to describe technical policy information in a way that is meaningful to the community. "You have to make your message drive home and create a connection with the people. In order to make a difference, you must be able to talk with people. Use your tools to get the conversation started," said Montez.

"... You must make your message meaningful for everyone involved, especially those adverse to the idea." Alece Montez

Through Heart & Soul Community Planning, the Orton Family Foundation provides guidance to a community by helping them assess their own unique assets. Montez said, "Residents articulate their shared values, through a storytelling/story-listening method. How values get translated is up to the community and can take on many forms from municipal codes, partnerships, funding changes to everyday actions like waving hello to a neighbor. Important changes happen at the local government level and the community can drive these changes." Her work with the OFF helps set up and provide a setting and atmosphere for people to develop these value statements. "It's important to allow people to take accountability and grow a sense of obligation to each other. To accommodate this, there needs to be as many entry points in the process and the community to get involved and be civic in some way. Once this happens, you'll increase your chances that people will remain committed and involved. When people create the values, they remain connected to them. Getting rid of the jargon and politics helps residents remain focused on the values and assets they have created," she said.

According to Montez, "In the situation of community involvement and engagement, it

is important to hear from the silent majority or simply "missing voices." Be sure to track participation and cross check whether you are hearing from the "same 10 people" or if you are truly hearing from a demographically representative group of community members. This goes back to the importance of an audience analysis, which starts by identifying who is in the community."

In some of the Orton Family Foundation's projects second homeowners and tourists are identified as a source of unplanned explosive growth. Because they seldom can vote in the communities where they have second homes, or just visit as tourists, it can be difficult to balance their interests with those of permanent residents. According to Montez, "In any decision-making process, some people will lean toward decisions based on money and profit. Second homeowners equate to immediate income for a city, so obviously they will not be discouraged. Second homeowners are residents too, so it is equally important to get their input too. This scenario points to a typical divide in communities—old-timers vs. newcomers There is often a divide between year-round and permanent residents or people deeply rooted in their hometown and newcomers just moving in to town." Montez said, "This divide needs to be realized and the focus changed to common values and assets. It will be beneficial to find a way to encourage deeper conversations, to help people network together, and build relationships to find a unifying voice. It is important that the voice of the entire community is represented when decision makers get involved."

Older couple resting on a bench on a waterfront in Michigan.

Montez sometimes works with communities that are stuck in an old way of doing business with old habitats and policies. She replied that changing the way business is done is difficult. "What is important is that the community backs up risks that people are taking for the better. It is also important to bring factions together to initiate the conversations. No solution will be found if all parties are not at the table," she said. "It is also key not to start with heavily debated issues, but to start with common ground and make people realize that they care about the same things. It is okay to start with baby steps and to make mistakes along the way; developing the vision of the community is worth the time," Montez said. She has found it beneficial to gently point to the successes of other communities. Angle the messages and goals to the community, but give them the space to become accountable and develop their assets.

One of the assets Michigan finds important is the Great Lakes. While lake levels fluctuate on normal cycles, climate change could cause more extreme lake

level changes. These dramatic changes, along with other problems facing Great Lakes shorelines are difficult for residents to deal with in ways that protect the resource. Rachael Franks Taylor, Director of Coastal Conservation for The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Michigan Chapter, said "Some shoreline habitats rely on lake level changes; however, climate change may make the changes even more extreme or tip them in one direction. Water level fluctuations and other coastal processes are natural, but it can be difficult for communities to live with the dynamism of shorelines. We can't tolerate natural processes that, for example, strand or submerge our coastal structures." She continued, "Sediment movement is another natural process, but erosion and accretion cycles can become disrupted by activities on shorelines and up in watersheds. Especially during low lake levels, more dredging is necessary to clear channels and ports for shipping." Franks Taylor stressed, "Educating the public is one way to minimize negative consequences. Tourism can and does have negative consequences, but is mostly good providing people a connection to the lakes. Tourism and property ownership are drivers, providing motivation for conservation."

Rachael Franks Taylor

DIRECTOR, COASTAL CONSERVATION, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, MICHIGAN CHAPTER

"Currently there is a lack of a common vision or understanding among the many stakeholders across the Great Lakes of what coastal health is and the desired state we should manage towards," according to Franks Taylor. "We seek to identify and contribute to filling persistent, critical data gaps that are necessary scientific building blocks to, together with partners, defining a desired future condition for coastal health in the Great Lakes. The task of conserving the entire Great Lakes system, which covers more than 94,000 square miles and holds one-fifth of the world's surface freshwater, is no small challenge. It will require a whole-system approach that employs projects targeted to priority places and can serve as models for replication," she continued. "Projects also must be focused where partnership and leverage opportunities are greatest in order to foster more effective coordination among the many agencies, organizations and programs independently engaged in conservation, policy and economic development across the Great Lakes," she said.

> "Tourism and property ownership are drivers, providing motivation for conservation." Rachael Franks Taylor

Jeff Smith, Co-Director of the New Economy Division of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP Inc.), and Project Manager of the Technology Innovation Center (TIC) for the City of East Lansing, believes the state is missing a huge part of the economy—the lower level that actually creates things. Investment is key for new industry and new business, but when the traditional forms of investment are dried up—loans from family and friends and small business loans from banks—stagnation takes over. What if there were alternatives to this deeply ingrained model? What would such alternatives look like? Smith suggests these alternatives could be realized in the form of local investment structures, by which a community can truly invest in itself through a local stock exchange, or even a statewide stock exchange. "These exchanges would help provide equity funding by pairing willing local investors with medium and small-scale businesses that are primed for expansion," he said. The Kickstarter model, whereby individuals can seek out funding from sources near and far through an online exchange, is a concept that Smith appreciates and sees as a standard worth replicating. Kickstarter, however, does not retain the typical shareholder-dividend structure; investors are rewarded with swag, invites to product launch parties and other informal payments. The local and state exchanges would adhere to the classic dividend structure, whereby investors receive capital returns on their investments. Smith believes that getting equity and cash into the hands of creative people can truly make a difference for that business, that local economy and the state itself.

Jeff Smith

CO-DIRECTOR, NEW ECONOMY DIVISION, THE LANSING ECONOMIC AREA PARTNERSHIP (LEAP INC.), AND PROGRAM MANAGER, TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION CENTER, CITY OF EAST LANSING

Smith cites MSU as an entity that can grow businesses from scratch. He sees it as his job, and the responsibility of communities and the state, to figure out how to best align these businesses and move this state forward. "Entities like the TIC are one way of doing so, and similar types of partnerships between institutions, private interests and the public sector offer a strong route forward," he said. "The economy does not recognize municipal boundaries, and this state will continue to be slow to join the economy of the 21st century until those municipal boundaries become less prohibitive and the municipalities start to understand that what is good for one is good for all. We have the knowledge and resources in this state that have primed the entrepreneurial and innovative pumps; it's

time for the public sector to get on board and stop the stifling competition between themselves and embrace the potential human wealth and capital this state provides," he continued.

"East Lansing is the ideal location for a business incubator," Smith said, "and for a tech-business incubator in particular." Smith's work as a market analyst wasn't even necessary for him to realize the strength of the East Lansing community; MSU was clearly the resource that East Lansing could take advantage of and partner with for the betterment of the entire region. The University has strengths across the board, from the bio- and agrisciences, to engineering arts, communicative sciences, media arts and nuclear physics, and a large percentage of students are pursuing degrees in these fields. In this way, Smith describes MSU as creating a "crop" for the TIC; knowledgeable students with ink still wet on their diplomas, valuable technical and artistic skills, raring to go with new venture ideas that, until the TIC, had to go elsewhere to have their ideas embraced.

"... It's time for the public sector to get on board and stop the stifling competition between themselves and embrace the potential human wealth and capital this state provides."
Jeff Smith

The current lineup of TIC tenants is wide ranging, with firms focused on game design, healthcare software, high-end security background check software service, web design, video production and even a custom wine-cellar firm with products reaching $500,000 or more. "The barter system is alive and well through the hallways of the TIC, with the video production firm doing work for several other tenants, as well as the web design firm gaining access to clients right away," Smith said. This aspect of the TIC is something that Smith works hard to cultivate. He tries to group the various tenants in a way in which some collaborative work can occur throughout the firms, no matter how different they may be from one another. At this moment, the TIC has 90% occupancy, and has constant interest from potential firms. The waiting list never gets too long, because, as Smith explains, a small company does not have a wealth of time to sit on to wait for office space to open up. If the TIC can't take them, they move on quickly to find the next opportunity.

A smart phone scanning a QR code on a placard on Michigan Avenue in Lansing.

With the TIC's success has come much attention from communities throughout Michigan and beyond. Over its first three years of life, the TIC held between 100–150 tours, hosting different communities and colleges with city managers and university presidents taking a look around. Recent interest has come from Grand Rapids

and the City of Oberlin (OH) seeking to replicate the student version of the TIC, called "The Hatch," to take advantage of those cities' respective higher eduction institutions of Grand Valley State University and Oberlin College.

Smith stated, "With the TIC helping to fill in the missing piece of the Michigan economy that leaves tech start-ups to fend for themselves, it does not have the facilities available to help similar firms in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries or the food industry." As a result, Smith is currently helping to develop a chemical innovation center outfitted with the expensive equipment and materials required for a start-up chemical firm. After doing some due diligence toward investing in a commercial food incubator at property just east of Hagadorn and Jolly Roads on behalf of the Tri-County Area (Eaton, Clinton and Ingham counties), Smith helped an MSU team get that realized after the economics didn't work out for the Tri-Counties. Michigan State University recently purchased that building and is slated to start a food incubator in the near future, helping small businesses realize new markets by providing them the space and resources necessary to do so.

Smith cites the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Fab Lab, short for Fabrication Laboratory, as a model worth replicating in East Lansing and throughout the state. The MIT's lab exists for public use, making resources available for the general public to actually make things that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to make. He is currently looking at spaces in the East Lansing area that could be used for a similar purpose, and the City has even purchased a rapid prototyping machine for this purpose.

James (Jim) van Ravensway, Instructor in the School of Planning, Design and Construction at Michigan State University, and former Planning Director for the City of East Lansing, echoed many of the observations of Jeff Smith, regarding the importance of diversifying an economy and investing in innovation. "Incubators like the TIC represent part of the infrastructure that helps stimulate and support a budding technology economy. Once the fire is lit, you hope that the

James van Ravensway

INSTRUCTOR, MSU SCHOOL OF PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION; AND FORMER PLANNING DIRECTOR, CITY OF EAST LANSING

> "Once the fire is lit, you hope that the inertia of the private sector will take hold and private incubator-type facilities will start to emerge, replacing the need for government support." James van Ravensway

inertia of the private sector will take hold and private incubator-type facilities will start to emerge, replacing the need for government support." However good the idea of an incubator, communities should not try to replicate them based on a single model. "Incubators can be helpful for any city, although the type may vary depending on the local economy. There may be a need for restaurant incubators, or general office incubator. Not all local economies will be or need to be technology economies," said van Ravensway.

Global connections are also important. There is a global connection between East Lansing and Romania. Van Ravensway said, "global connections can stimulate both economic and cultural interactions that can benefit both." He continued, "Emerging markets, like Romania, present great economic opportunities for a variety of local businesses, and helps promote tourism. Establishing these relationships takes time, patience and some monetary investment—so the community needs to be committed to it."

Pedestrians around the Pangeas Cafe in Traverse City.

Moving toward Regionalism

One of the ways we can help improve our economic situation is to use regionalism as a framework for planning, economic development and the provision of public services. Regionalism is about cooperation and sharing. Bill Rustem stated that just 10 to 15 years ago nobody would talk about or consider the concept of regionalism, because of the negative connotations that people associated with it. "The problem is that all of the fiefdoms that were built in over a long period to encourage cooperation have changed philosophically and are no longer working as they were intended," he said.

There are now incentives built into the state budget to encourage the sharing of services, as well as some requirements for mergers. "This is not a process that is going to happen overnight in our state," Rustem said, "but it will gain momentum, and that regionalism and sharing of services are going to be necessary to survive and thrive in the New Economy.

Rustem said, "One of our fundamental shortcomings is that there is still not a viable regional transit authority in southeast Michigan." He stated that Detroit is one of the largest metropolitan airports in North America where passengers deplane and must take a cab, because the option of connecting to your next destination by high-speed train or bus lines is not available.

Rustem also explained that there are really two dynamics at work in any political issue: the policy shift and the public will. "And in order to obtain a policy shift, the public will must be developed and moved accordingly," he continued. Rustem wrapped up the scenario neatly when he said, "politicians don't, particularly legislatures, lead; they follow where the public is." He said that the only person in the position with the means of changing the public will is someone within the executive office. He also said, "one of the greatest examples of a leader in our history was Teddy Roosevelt, because he led by the way he talked and framed the issues."

Julie Powers said, "I think regionalism is the key to future success. If our policies don't reflect the shifting nature of our economy and demographics, then we will be doomed to living a 20th century–economy in a 21st century–world." She continued, "We must have policies that

Julie Powers

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MID-MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION COUNCIL**

reflect the future, not the past or even the present. I think that Michigan leaders should focus on preserving natural resources, while fostering economic growth. That sounds very simple, but it requires bringing together leaders in housing, transportation, education, workforce development, environmental protection and more to ensure that we are planning for the future in an environmentally responsible way while maximizing the resources of the region."

Joe Borgstrom also believes that regionalism is important in turning around Michigan. According to Borgstrom, "Communities need to be looking to their neighbors to see what services they could team up on and save money." Things like transportation costs can be very expensive and unsustainable.

In context of the entire state of Michigan, Jeff Smith believes that there is too much competition between governments. "The old model of land use planning and economic development on the municipal level is out. For too long the municipal approach in Michigan has been focused on a competition between municipalities to attract companies to come into their jurisdictions based on income tax abatements and other giveaways, by making way for large, single-use office industrial parks on greenfields," he said. "Jobs in this state should not be treated as a zero-sum game," Smith stated, "and it is up to cities and institutions to work together to add cards to the deck, not just rearrange them through competition by moving businesses from office park to office park," he continued. "The resources exist—Michigan is home to 15 public university campuses, including the powerful research corridor featuring the University of Michigan, Wayne State University and Michigan State University. These universities are walking wealth centers of knowledge that the state must harvest, keeping that knowledge and skill from bleeding out of the state. Initiatives like the TIC are a part of that effort, as well as improving on such efforts as the MSU Extension and creating similar incubators across the state and helping existing ones thrive," Smith said.

Students outside of Berkey Hall at Michigan State University.

Moving Detroit Forward

"The biggest shift in Michigan," according to Bill Rustem, "is the public understanding of the rural and urban interrelationship and the importance of both." He said that if Detroit does not come back, the state of Michigan will not come back either, and nobody would have believed that only 10 to 15 years ago. "People now understand for your land-based industries, (agriculture, forestry and tourism) you can't have willy-nilly development everywhere, or those industries cannot survive," he said."

Ben Hecht, President and CEO of Living Cities, offers these observations on how we came to the present disconnect between the realities of the present century and the legacy of policies, and their implementation over that past decades. "There is a slide that I show when I talk about Detroit that shows Boston (MA) , San Francisco (CA), and the Island of Manhattan (NY), which all fit within the physical boundaries of the City of Detroit. But they have 3 million people together, compared to 700,000 in Detroit," he said. "One reason that Detroit is so big is that it could be. It's the home of the car, you could drive anywhere. But there are other factors. In the 40s and 50s and 60s, the GI Bill and FHA insurance created a bias toward suburbs, and not cities. So the really insane ways that land is used in 2010/2011 doesn't fit the way the world works, but is very much a legacy of the way it worked 100 years ago," Hecht continued. "Fundamentally, one of the biggest challenges is the disconnect between the way the world works today and current constraints on natural resources, for example, and current realities of people wanting to live in more concentrated, densely populated areas, and people wanting to use public transit. That disconnect that is historic and is hard to overcome," he concluded.

"Fundamentally, one of the biggest challenges is the disconnect between the way the world works today and current constraints on natural resources, for example, and current realities of people wanting to live in more concentrated, densely populated areas, and people wanting to use public transit."
Ben Hecht

"Policy influences so many areas," said Hecht. "How can you change those patterns so you can have a more sustainable approach, even if it's just asking how do you deliver water and sewer and police services to part of the city where there just is not a concentration of people to make it cost effective? There are all of these pressures on how land should be used. The problems are in so many areas. How do you move people from places that aren't sustainable anymore? These, of course, are real people who vote. How do you shut off their services, and then how do you use the land in a way that is economically viable?," he asked. "The states, of course, create local jurisdictions; even counties are a function of the state. In Michigan, there are thousands of local jurisdictions; school districts, water districts, cities, municipalities, counties,

Ben Hecht
PRESIDENT AND CEO, LIVING CITIES

which is incredibly inefficient. In today's world that plethora of jurisdictions makes what you do—any kind of change in land use policy—even harder," he stated. "There are councils in many of those districts, there are superintendents. It is tough to get people to work together. There has to be something beyond people just wanting to work together, if we are serious about making a difference here. We need some radical rethinking of how people interact with one another, of how we govern ourselves," Hecht concluded.

In regards to efforts to make our cities more energy efficient, both in retrofits and in the way they are designed, Ben Hecht discussed those efforts and the resistance to it. "It is happening; it is just slow," he said. "We are so early in the adoption curve that it is frustrating. It's way slower than people who have been working on this issue for a long time, such as myself, would want," he continued. "I'll tell you what it is. It makes sense once you understand it. Part of the confusion is that there are so many different types of stock that you would want to make more energy efficient. But individual homeowners do not want to borrow money for upgrades, because they are uncertain of the value of their homes. Owners of commercial rental properties do not have an incentive, because tenants pay the utilities. And commercial office buildings have such complex ownership structures and owners who only want to hold them for a couple of years. So you have to make retrofitting the buildings as easy as possible, and as cost effective as possible. The easier you make the transaction, the more likely to happen it will be. And that is what we've been trying to do," Hecht stated.

Peter Kageyama gave a speech in Michigan in 2009, on "Frontier Cities," in which he said that a brave city is one that does not just highlight the bright spots of their city, but admits its shortcomings and challenges people to help improve and make a difference in their city. Kageyama thinks that a certain type of person will respond to this type of challenge instead of looking for a place that already has all the comforts and amenities that they would want. An example is New Orleans (LA) after Hurricane Katrina. According to Kageyama, "People have gone there to help rebuild and make their mark on that City. They are attracting adventurous and entrepreneurial

Peter Kageyama

CO-FOUNDER AND PRODUCER, CREATIVE CITIES SUMMIT; AND AUTHOR OF "FOR THE LOVE OF CITIES"

people who are looking for more than to just collect a paycheck. You did not go back to New Orleans, because it was easy. You went back to New Orleans to be part of making something." He noted that Detroit can't compete with Chicago (IL) on its amenities and should not be playing that game. "The appeal of Detroit is in its grit, its empty buildings and its frontier spirit."

Kageyama believes that an emotional connection to one's city is important. "Cities need to actively work on this emotional connection. Children do better when they are loved and in a caring environment, and so will our neighborhoods," he said. This connection, he noted, is more difficult in a sprawl region, such as Southeast Michigan. "In the Detroit area, most people drive. Driving is an isolating event and limits interaction, which, in turn, decreases the connection that people have to their city. An example is someone who drives into Detroit and works at the Renaissance Center. This person probably parks right in the building, goes to work for the day and at the end of the work day leaves and drives home. For this person there is very little interaction with the City. "This narrow view limited the experience of the City and, in turn, limits their emotional connection to the City," Kageyama concluded.

Kageyama has an idea that only 719 people can change Detroit. "This idea comes from the fact that most people consume the city and only a small percent actually make the city. The people that make the city include people like mayors, officials, developers, artists and entrepreneurs—he calls them "co-creators" in his book. He cites the fact that many people use Wikipedia, but less than 1% of users actually create all the content, which means we are all benefiting from the efforts of those creators. He called this "participation inequality," and believes that same goes for cities. "The population of Detroit is around 719,000 which means about 720 people are making all the content that is the city," he said. He would like to see that number increased, which is where the 719 number comes from. "Seven hundred nineteen *more* makers, doers, entrepreneurs and connectors would have an exponential impact on the overall 'content' of the

Girl dancing with banjo player in Grand Rapids at 2012 ArtPrize.

City and, in turn, on the overall quality of Detroit," he noted. These co-creators are key assets for cities to attract and retain. One way for Detroit to attract more of these co-creators is to use the Frontier City–idea, and play up that the Midwest and many Rustbelt cities could now be considered the next great American Frontier," he said. Kageyama believes we need to treat these co-creators as the valuable assets they are. He concluded, "We have tools and policies to protect our anchor businesses and institutions, but what about those 'anchor personas' in our communities? We need to recognize them, value them and find more of them for our communities."

Philip Lauri, Creative Director of Detroit Lives!, who holds a concept somewhat similar to that of Peter Kageyama, believes saving Detroit requires a team. "The sustainability of any place relies on the strength of a creative cohort," he said. As Lauri explains, "My personal opinion is that there is no Jesus solution to this City. It's not going to be one thing that "saves" us here, it's going to be the collective energy from a lot of isolated happenings: inner-city community leaders rising up through urban agriculture, suburban high schoolers coming down for Deadmau5 shows at the Fillmore, the creative sector providing a growth tool for economic activity, the state enacting policy to support angel investments, families coming down for a ballgame at Comerica Park, active city-dwellers convincing friends to move to the City, suburbanites growing their businesses in the suburbs and considering office locations downtown. I could honestly go on and on—literally—for another 10 minutes. We need it all. Every single ounce of energy, we need to harvest it," Lauri said.

"Every single ounce of energy, we need to harvest it." Philip Lauri

Instead of placing value on an old, industrial paradigm—one that focused almost strictly on an economic process and not at all of social aspects—Lauri describes qualities of a New Economy, investing in knowledge and skills and a grouping of this knowledge and skill. "In the New Economy, it is competition within the network of the city that keeps it running; the more competing technologies there are available, the better," he said. Lauri is all too aware of the Old Economy and the resulting old land use pattern. He feels as though looking back is simply not an option saying, ". . . we cannot dwell on what is or what has been. We must think of what can be, and ferociously search for ways in which to realize that potential, even if it's just creating some fruitful dialogue that seems difficult." This dialogue is what can result from a "collective energy" and a focus on growing the net, which, through the partnerships he has created with Detroit Lives! is steadily developing.

Lauri is a huge proponent of developed each partnership, or affiliation, as the more there are the stronger the network there is within the city. One organization in particular is Team Loveland, which is making it easier

Philip Lauri

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, DETROIT LIVES!

for everyone to purchase real estate. He described the process as: "What's really great is that what was, for a very long time, a very murky and unclear process (as of last year when I participated) is getting much more visible and easier to circumnavigate—thanks to the good work of Team Loveland. Their mapping efforts with www.whydontweownthis.com has made it much, much easier to identify properties available [in Detroit]. In addition, they are providing communication portals that allow for constructive bidding to create an auction that results in healthy land use. Plain and simple." Lauri said that the work Team Loveland has been doing not only helps to make known the mass of empty lots and empty homes there are in the City, but helps to fill them.

Another important partnership that Detroit Lives! currently has is with the Georgia Street Community Collective, also known as the Georgia Street Garden. "Having started out as a vacant lot, over the past few years it has become a vital part of the surrounding neighborhood. Not only is it a working and sustainable local food source, but it also provides the community with a central meeting place for engagement and discussion," Lauri said. Further, it is a program by which the community can take pride in and, further, trust. This issue of trust is of extreme relevance. Lauri asks, "Do people trust the City? Who do they trust? In a lot of cases, it is the neighborhood development corporations that they have a working relationship with, the nonprofits and developmental bodies that push for development in the neighborhoods.

Visitors shopping at Eastern Market in Detroit.

In Eastern Market, there's the Eastern Market Development Corporation. In Brightmoor, there's the Brightmoor Alliance or the Northwest Development Corporation. These are organizational bodies that have worked with and gained the trust of the people that occupy these neighborhoods. Perhaps they should be relaying the message," he concluded.

While there are a multitude of programs that Detroit Lives! has partnered with, there are also a slew of programs and projects they themselves have developed that contribute to placemaking and a brighter future for the City. One of these projects is a film entitled "After the Factory," which compares the City of Detroit and the City of Łódz, located in Poland. Both are post-industrial cities, and both are currently in the midst of renewal. While Detroit was, at one point, the automotive capital of the world; Łódz was identified by its textile production. Lauri makes the point, "What happens when information sharing right NOW becomes a crucial part of future success as opposed to looking back? What happens when we enter the battlefield

with a trans-continental sibling looking to wage the same war of re-imagination? Will we stagnate together until someone else defines a new era of progression? Or, will a connection now lead to newborn policy and ideas that could help hundreds of future cities, revolutionizing the way we look at modern cities?" The film might be seen as a form of placemaking in that it actively provides identity and perhaps pride for both Łódz and Detroit.

Art-based programs and initiatives are yet another way in which Lauri and Detroit Lives! have contributed to placemaking. One such initiative is the guerilla art that the organization creates. Guerilla art efforts are often quick methods by which one can spread a message, whether that be through graffiti, stenciling, sticker or some form of installation. The product is often small in comparison to the large effects it can have, and while in most cases the works are temporary, the ideas that come as a result of the intervention can be everlasting. These guerilla art forms that carry with them the message Detroit Lives! (and other sayings) not only help to advertise the organization for further exploration of engagement within the City, but they, again, can fill viewers with pride for where they live or work. Other such art programs include stART SPACE, which creates new clothing embodying the creative culture of Detroit, and Mantracity Murals, a program providing motivational messages on once bare walls. All of these programs and initiatives contribute to Lauri and his organization's placemaking strategy.

It is policy that will continue to help Detroit in its transfer from an Old to New Economy. As Lauri states, "No question there is an interesting debate, as it relates to getting Detroit and the State of Michigan, as a whole, operating more efficiently. We stand to gain from creativity in the operation and use of revenues, with a mindful eye for out-of-the-box methods of raising them, too." He continued, "A big component of creating that resource circulation is jobs. Shall we retain residents first and work with re-employing the current populous? Or attract new residents for specific growth industries that will ultimately put more money in circulation and lead to larger scale job creation? Detroiters, in general, can get a wee bit too weary of "outsiders" and end up ignoring the fact that both ideas can lead to the same successful result."

"In January of 2010, Living Cities sent a Request for Proposals to 19 cities," said Ben Hecht. "You tell us what you have been working on for a little while that has some momentum that benefits low-income people. Something that you have not had the collective will to adequately address, that is big enough that you could use loans, grants and flexible debt to attack several different problems at once. For example, land that has to be repurposed, or attempts to bring density back to places that have economic potential, like Midtown, like the Woodward Corridor. We sent out 19 proposals and selected five, and Detroit was one of the five. Those are issues that are true in a lot of the country, but Detroit was closer to addressing them in a substantive, material way than anyone else," he explained.

Hecht said, "Things really are looking hopeful in Detroit. There have been many

obstacles; look at the turn over in the mayor's office alone. But things are more stable now and processes that have been going on for three or four years are starting to get some traction. I am guardedly optimistic that Detroit is on the right track. It is a long-term horizon, and that is key, but the trajectory is right."

Detroit currently has a glut of affordable housing, due in main part to the decline in population that left many homes unoccupied, and the mortgage and foreclosure crisis. Vacancy has also led to blight, which harms the image of the City. Still, it is not always easy to place people who want to live in Detroit in housing they can afford. Eugene Jones, President and CEO of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and former Executive Director of the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC) said that the image of what "low-income housing" looks like has changed. "Historically, the mental image people have of low-income housing is large, high-rise buildings in the central city that are centers for crime, poverty, drugs, violence and other illegal activity," he said. Jones continued by saying that this is not what low-income housing is anymore. "Due to Section 8 vouchers, where residents can use the federal funds to rent a home wherever they desire and new standards for housing, new units are being developed. Smaller apartment complexes, condominiums and townhouses are now being developed instead of the large high-rise housing projects," he stated.

Another change in affordable housing is redevelopment or revitalization. Instead of receiving large federal grants to build

Eugene Jones

PRESIDENT AND CEO, TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION; AND FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DETROIT HOUSING COMMISSION

completely new units, new funding is now being used for revitalization, demolition and rebuilding of housing. The funding for these types of programs is from the HOPE VI grant. This federal grant gives money to communities willing to rebuild and revitalize affordable housing. Jones said that the HOPE VI funding was the most important to the DHC currently, as the commission continues to revitalize

"Smaller apartment complexes, condominiums and townhouses are now being developed instead of the large high-rise housing projects."
Eugene Jones

affordable housing in Detroit. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development enacted HOPE VI in October of 1992. The goals of HOPE VI are to provide affordable housing, while improving the physical properties offered to residents. The program aims to improve social conditions through the lessening of high concentrations of poverty in one area of the city. This is done by demolition of old housing projects and constructing new units spread throughout the city. These grants are given to communities and projects that are willing to incorporate smart growth principles in their designs. The program intends to create pedestrian friendly neighborhoods that increase interaction. It stays away from large housing units; instead, the program aims to construct small rentable houses or row houses, each with a small front yard area. While the funds can be used for construction, the majority of the funds are used for demolition, revitalization and for Section 8 vouchers. This allows for the residents to find their own unit and find places to live throughout the city.

The idea of placemaking is a hot topic that surrounds affordable housing, especially combining affordable housing with placemaking development. Because of the perceived negative connotation that is associated with affordable housing, people in many communities oppose it. This is not the experience in Detroit, where the Detroit Housing Commission finds that the location for affordable housing does not come under a lot of scrutiny. Because of the social and economic climate in the City, affordable housing is never an issue. There are not social or community groups opposing where

Teens walking down sidewalk in a residential neighborhood.

construction can take place. Actually, the DHC is given the opportunity to locate housing wherever they can find land and believe housing will fit in with the city. The DHC attempts to find locations that offer the most amenities to the residents of the area. This includes basic services like drug stores, grocery stores and small shopping areas. The hope is to create housing areas that are near commercial areas to allow ease of transportation between the two. Due to the economic climate of the City at this time, however, this is not easy.

Transportation availability is a factor in the ability of low-income persons improving their livelihoods. Currently, the City of Detroit and surrounding areas do not offer an adequate public transportation system. This means that the citizens living in the central city in affordable housing units must have a car for every process of their everyday lives, such as to go to work, the grocery store, school, visit family, doctor visits, etc. For people who are trying to get ahead, but are not yet able to afford a car, this becomes a major barrier to lifting themselves out of poverty.

Sarah Szurpicki and friend Abby Wilson co-founded the Great Lakes Urban Exchange (GLUE) in 2007, after realizing their cities (Detroit and Pittsburgh (PA)) were facing the same problems. "They were similar but on different timelines," stated Szurpicki, the Director of GLUE. "They have the same historical legacy and we thought, some of the solutions people are developing should also be the same." That wasn't necessarily the case, though. The group's second thought was to organize within the cities. Detroit and Pittsburgh both displayed great networking amongst the people in nonprofits and citizen groups, according to Szurpicki. "All the people working on revitalization are, at maximum, one degree of separation away," she said. That closeness didn't extend to citizens in nearby communities. There was virtually no connection between duo's cities and neighboring communities, and both founders thought that was a waste of time and energy. Instead, they believed, the people in these metropolises should be working together and sharing solutions they come up with so the region as a whole could prosper.

Sarah Szurpicki

CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, GREAT LAKES URBAN EXCHANGE

Szurpicki cites the brain drain–concept as an important problem for suffering cities. Both founders worked in various cities once graduating from college. Szurpicki had migrated around. She had seen, first-hand, the effects of brain drain, while moving around the cities of Washington, D.C. and New York (NY) before settling down in Detroit. "To compensate for the brain drain, we found the solutions people were coming up with were basically marketing campaigns that missed the mark," she says. "Stop telling us that Detroit is like living in New York." So Szurpicki took these fundamental observations and, with Abby Wilson, set up GLUE to address them. Foremost in their plan was creating conversations between young people. These young people needed to meet, talk and share ideas. Szurpicki added, "It was a way to lift up their voices and let them be heard."

"Stop telling us that Detroit is like living in New York." Sarah Szurpicki

Szurpicki found from her studies at Harvard University that science and non-science professionals need to work together to solve problems. "We had a lot of institutions that think of themselves as really objective and not needing public input, but science should require non-science inclusion," she said.

Currently, the GLUE network counts more than 2,000 connections; people paying attention to their newsletters, activities and dialogues. Szurpicki cites several partnerships with public policy organizations including the aforementioned Living Cities. So far, there have been four annual conferences drawing together GLUE supporters from Great Lakes states to share ideas. "Then there is the I Will Stay If . . . campaign, which garnered the attention of local press—one way of changing the conversation," said Szurpicki. Yet, she can't credit any real change in the cities to her organization just yet and is hesitant to admit some new nonprofits seem to be taking points from her own group. "I do feel like we've contributed. There's Renovating the Rust Belt and Rust Wire, a popular news outlet. We've helped them start to connect," she added. There's also a documentary entitled "Saving Cities" aimed at promoting understanding and connection between these rusty cities that Szurpicki helped with.

"I am not a land policy expert," Szurpicki admitted, "but we have a situation here that exists nowhere else." Detroit has a vast extent of vacant property that is hard to top in other cities. According to 2008 figures, 10% of Detroit's residential units were vacant, and 32% of overall property was vacant for abandonment reasons. To top it all off, the City has had a 43% decline in population from 1960 to 2000, the 6th largest drop compared to other metro areas. One partial solution for the massive amounts of vacant land throughout cities that have emptied out is the efforts by land banks. One great example is the Genesee County Land Bank, run by the County Treasurer to improve neighborhoods that have a glut of foreclosed, abandoned and blighted properties. Its mission is to restore value to the community by acquiring, developing and selling vacant and abandoned properties in cooperation with stakeholders who value responsible land ownership. They provide a range of services, including demolition of properties to reduce further degradation in neighborhoods and side lot transfers. Side lot transfers, for instance, are available to any homeowner living adjacent to a vacant lot and wishing to absorb the land to improve their space. For $1, a few nominal fees and payment of the foreclosure's taxes, the owner helps to bring the property back onto the tax roll.

Robert Anderson, Director of the City of Detroit's Department of Planning and Development, said, "Detroit has captured the eyes of the nation as a major metropolitan area undergoing a period of decline. The question of how to mend the City of Detroit is on the minds of many people across Michigan and the rest of the United States." While many believe the solution is a problem of the economy, Anderson identified one of the major problems of Detroit as being internal, "institutionalized dysfunction." Detroit currently has two different

Robert Anderson

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, CITY OF DETROIT

Bustling street in downtown Detroit.

planning departments, the Department of Planning and Development, and the Planning Commission. Previously, the two planning agencies worked completely independent of one another and this created inconsistencies with the goals for Detroit. According to Anderson, "I don't know of any city in the country that has two separate planning agencies." The City Council runs the Planning Commission, and the Mayor's administration oversees the Department of Planning and Development.

In an attempt to bring the two different planning agencies together, Anderson stated that he invited the members of the Planning Commission to participate in events that they would not usually be invited to participate in. For example, he created a task force of people from the Department of Planning and Development and the Planning Commission to reduce the line items associated with the budget of the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to a more manageable number, something that was not done before. The items associated with the CDBG are dated back to 1994, and are in serious need of being updated. On January 9, 2012, a hearing was planned to eliminate 1,500 line items from the budget. "The process of uniting the efforts of the two departments has been difficult, but the unification of the two branches of planning within Detroit will create a much more effective system dedicated to the betterment of the region," said Anderson.

Detroit is a large metropolitan core with a low-density population compared to other large metropolitan regions. The total land area of Detroit is 139 square miles and, at one point, was recorded to have 1.8 million people. "New Census data will be released soon that says Detroit now has about 730,000 to 740,000 people" according to Anderson. The issue now in Detroit is that there are a lot more houses

than people. These homes are becoming abandoned slums around the City. The abandonment also can be seen in many commercial buildings in Detroit. Anderson stated, "The Mayor has a campaign to demolish 10,000 homes that are negatively impacting neighborhoods." The built environment was created to accommodate around two million people, and the Mayor is trying to alter the City to meet its current population needs. The declining population has especially affected the City by decreasing the amount of tax money that comes in to maintain Detroit's public services. The decrease in incoming taxes has greatly affected the budget of the City and is leading to further budget cuts. Detroit has not invested in street lighting in 20 years, due to lack of funds. Also, the sewer and water infrastructure lack updates and renovations, due to lack of funds as well. The lack of tax revenue coming into the City also prohibits the creation of a denser living environment.

Detroit struggles with its built environment, and its inability to maintain public services and renovation to many of the blighted neighborhoods. Many people believe that the issue is all the land in Detroit, but according to Anderson, "land area isn't as important and costly as the built environment," when it comes to the expenses of Detroit. The dilapidated built environment is more of a concern to Detroit than the extent of the geographic area. The Detroit Works project is a program that is being used to reevaluate how Detroit functions as a city. [It resulted in the Detroit Future City Plan, released in January of 2013.] Anderson stated, "There are areas of Detroit where we have lost 40% population in certain census tracks between 2000 and 2010." The regions where there have been steep population decline have also become regions where crime is becoming more common. Anderson said, "in the long run, if we play our cards right, it [shrinking the city] can actually be an opportunity for us." There are possibilities for redevelopment, open space and even possibly urban farming. The bottom line is, as Anderson said, "We don't have the revenue to operate the City that we had in the past." Changes must be made to Detroit in order to recreate a flourishing economy and safe living environment. The low-density nature of the greater Detroit area has greatly affected its ability to operate.

Anderson sees the emptying out of Detroit's metro core as a "fantastic opportunity for open space and recreation." The Department of Planning and Development manages the City's real estate portfolio and Detroit has control of more than 64,000 parcels of land. Of the 64,000 parcels of land that Detroit has control over, about 10,000 to 12,000 parcels have single-family homes on them that need to come down or be renovated. Anderson stated, "Because we have so much land area, because we have so many parcels and buildings publicly and privately held, the City of Detroit is an incredible bargain right now." The issue in Detroit is not the cost of land—it is the cost of taxes after obtaining the property.

"Because we have so much land area, because we have so many parcels and buildings publicly and privately held, the City of Detroit is an incredible bargain right now." Robert Anderson

The high taxes make it difficult for residents to buy the affordable houses in Detroit that need renovation, because they would be unable to maintain the tax payments to the City. According to Anderson, "There are 18,000 parcels that are going through tax foreclosures alone." The number of parcels that Detroit has control over may increase to around 80,000 parcels, due to tax foreclosures and residents walking away from their homes. An idea proposed by Anderson is to create a tax system that incentivizes people to buy the low-cost homes in Detroit without eventually forcing them to walk away from the property, due to tax prices. There are many other factors that have caused people to walk away from their homes, such as jobs and the economy, but the tax system is something that Detroit has control over.

With the abandonment of buildings, there is the risk of contamination and categorizing parcels as brownfield sites. Anderson spoke of a specific example, a former Detroit Public Works (DPW) facility in Southwest Detroit, where they worked on vehicles and engaged in other industrial activities. "It has been in the hands of the City for close to 80 years, but it has recently become unused. The site is around 30 acres in total area. The DPW site has the potential of past contamination, but there is a developer that is interested in redeveloping the site. A nonprofit company has offered to bring in a team of people from all over the country to do a feasibility study of the land to see what the site can be repurposed for. The Planning and Development Department, in collaboration with the Corporate Council and the Building Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department, were able to release the project for analysis for market opportunities under a program of the Urban Land Institute. The DPW site is just one example of abandoned sites located all over Detroit that have potential for cleanup and reuse," he said.

Detroit has the potential to break new ground in renewable energy and energy conservation. People all over the world are looking for more efficient forms of renewable energy and ways to conserve or reuse existing forms of energy and nonrenewable resources. An idea proposed by Anderson is to retrofit the unused piping in the abandoned neighborhoods for geothermal heating. Geothermal heating is a form of renewable energy that is consistent and available all over the world, in almost any given location. Creating a geothermal heating system in some of the neighborhoods would greatly lower the cost of indoor climate control for people that previously may have not been able to afford adequate heating and cooling. Not only is geothermal affordable and renewable, but it is also attractive to outsiders who take great value in living in a community with renewable energy options. Detroit could become attractive to people who would like a community wide geothermal option, which would encourage them to move into the region.

An important aspect for economic growth is the attraction of new talent to a region. A city must have a reason for the talented and educated work force to move to a region to help to create more jobs. In Detroit, the attraction of talent is done mainly within

the private sector. According to Anderson, "Compuware, Quicken Loans, Blue Cross Blue Shield and the hospital facilities are really proactive in bringing young talent into the community; they have established loan and grant programs for young people, for employees of their agencies to move into town." The young workers are able to obtain money from their respective companies to buy or rent property in Detroit to help incentivize them to move into the region. The encouragement from the private sector is helpful to Detroit in a way that the local government is unable to provide.

Detroit is an ideal location for people who have limited money and wish to start up a business. The buildings are available for purchase for cheap for people who are looking to start up a business in Detroit. There are economic incentive programs between the Department of Planning and Development and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation to promote development. According to Anderson, "There is a lot of investment happening in Detroit." For example, the Department of Planning and Development has assisted several communities near Wayne State that are artist communities. The growing artistic and hipster population has become widespread across the U.S. and the promotion of artistic communities is attractive to young people. The low cost of buildings and housing is helping with the encouragement of young people moving into the area. In addition to the cheap cost of purchasing a home or apartment, Robert Anderson stated, "What I am working on now is trying to lower the transaction cost of setting up a business. Detroit is

Store owner holding up an "open" sign outside of their store.

notorious for having rules and regulations that are hard to get through for setting up a business." If it becomes easier for people to set up a business in Detroit this may attract more people to the area looking to start their own company. "The attraction of people to Detroit will be instrumental in its economic rebirth," he said.

Many people believe that the way to bring life back to Detroit is through rebuilding the City. However, Anderson sees the solution for Detroit to not be solely based off of new construction, but rather renovation of the current structures of Detroit. There are neighborhoods in Detroit that have already undergone complete abandonment, but there are also transitional neighborhoods that are in the process of population decline, but are still able to be salvaged. Through the Detroit Works Program the Department of Planning and Development is looking at targeting their efforts on the transitional neighborhoods to stop the abandonment before it is too late. Anderson hopes that the City is able to "tip them [transitional neighborhoods] in the positive direction

through investment and attention to them." Preventing the downfall of neighborhoods would be much more beneficial to the people of Detroit and the built environment than fixing the issues after the fall of the neighborhoods has already happened.

Renovation is a way that the transitional neighborhoods can be "tipped in the positive direction." Renovation also allows a person to remain in their preexisting neighborhoods rather than being relocated, which in turn creates a greater sense of place. Anderson stated that he believes, "renovation creates jobs; new construction is for the most part modular homes that are built somewhere else and no one in town gets a job." Renovation would create greater employment opportunities for the people of Detroit that are currently without work.

Renovation also maintains the lifestyle and sense of community of the neighborhood. "The neighborhood is the building block of a community," said Anderson. It is important to maintain the sense of community so that people want to work toward the safety, betterment and preservation of their neighborhood. A sense of community brings the people together to defend what is important to them and to stand up and take action in their own lives. The era of new construction and passive attitude toward transitional neighborhoods in Detroit needs to end. Anderson stated, "We need to stop building in areas that people have chosen to leave and start defending areas that people are trying to defend themselves." The preservation and renovation of transitional neighborhoods is necessary to the maintenance of the sense of community in Detroit and instrumental in the creation of jobs. Editor's note: In March 2013, an Emergency Financial Manager was appointed, which adds another step to planning- and development-related decisions.

Joe Borgstrom sees assets in Detroit. He believes that people forget to think about the actual number of people living in Detroit. More than 700,000 people live in Detroit, as compared to Michigan's second largest city, Grand Rapids, with 200,000 people. He believes it is important to remember that Detroit is still one of the largest cities in the country. "Detroit needs to leave the 'shrinking city' concept behind and focus on those people who have stayed. People like to focus on the numbers that were realized after the census, with Detroit losing 25% of its population in a decade. While this may be dramatic, there are still 700,000+ people living and depending on Detroit. Focusing on these people who have stayed with the City is an important asset to realize," he said. "Companies like Quicken Loans, Compuware and Blue Cross Blue Shield have realized the potential in Detroit and have decided to move back downtown, because of the need to attract and find talented people," he continued. Borgstrom quoted Dan Gilbert, Quicken Loans Chairman, who said that he was moving his company back to downtown Detroit "because that's where we need to be to get the talent we need to be successful." There is still potential in Detroit, we just need to find and realize it.

Brad Garmon acknowledged that transportation alone will not solve all the problems in cities, especially Detroit. "Detroit has a large land mass, and a more thoughtful approach to land use must be used in Detroit, specifically when discussing neighborhoods," he said. Garmon believes that neighborhoods must be redesigned to accommodate a lifestyle focused on ease of access, walkable communities with services that reside in the community and are easily accessible. "Redevelopment of Detroit neighborhoods is important to revitalizing the City," he said.

Another issue related to land use that Garmon feels is greatly holding back Michigan cities, along with the previous issues mentioned, is the lack of diversity and the segregated layers of the Detroit metro area. Many cities lack the diversity that young, educated people tend to seek when determining where to live. He uses Lansing as an example to illustrate this. Lansing lacks retail; however, when you go across the City, Old Town [a neighborhood of Lansing] presents a different case. Old Town lacks nightlife and housing. Michigan cities are under-investing in diversity, which is greatly hurting the chances of cities to attract talented people. Garmon believes another type of diversity also affects Michigan cities. Racial diversity and segregation, primarily in Southeast Michigan, needs to be fixed in order to attract people as well. If you look at Detroit, the inner city of Detroit is primarily African American, and as you move out away from the city the racial and cultural make up changes and the segregation continues. Talented people want a culturally and racially diverse place to live and Southeast Michigan does not present that to them. Garmon said that Michigan "needs to be diverse in order to attract people," not only in activities, but also culturally and racially. He stated that he feels like diversity is still thought to be unnecessary in Michigan, and that there is a level of institutional racism that still exists in the state. He feels that this can be noticed when looking at land use, and believes that a greater opportunity for cross cultural communication can help to alleviate this problem and move Michigan forward.

Summary and Conclusions

Michigan has the advantage of an array of thought leaders who are interested in seeing the state recover from what some have called an economic Katrina. The thought leaders featured in this report come from varied backgrounds in the business, government and nonprofit sectors. Some work at the local level, where they are active in the trenches, while others work in the regional, state, national or international scene. Thankfully, many of the leaders recognized how Michigan moved into an economic decline, and also how it can move forward toward prosperity. If we pay attention to the ideas of these leaders, we find that they share the common belief that the following are vital to a more prosperous future for Michigan:

- Michigan communities need to wholeheartedly commit to the economic development concept of placemaking: It is the route to attracting a talented, educated and innovative population who will lead the economic turn-around of the state.
- Policy is at the heart of both the damage society has done to itself, the economy and environment, and the potential way out of those messes: We need to abandon an allegiance to old policies just because they have been around for a long time, and to look seriously at how to develop and implement policies that will take us toward a sustainable prosperity.
- A better educated population is needed: This includes a high-quality general education for our children and greater skill training and technical knowledge for adults.
- The economy needs greater diversification: For a long time Michigan hung its future on the automobile industry, and suffered through its ups and downs. However, that industry and manufacturing, in general, while still important, operate differently now, requiring fewer, but better educated workers.
- The environment is an important piece of our economic recovery. It is not an either or situation, but both: The economy will not recover unless we think of the environment as the stage on which our economy and quality of life depend. Bringing green spaces closer to people will help them learn of the importance of environmental quality, and how to protect the environment.
- Regional cooperation is vital to moving Michigan forward: The problems and opportunities Michigan communities face cannot be solved except at a regional scale. Therefore, public policy can

stimulate such cooperation, as well as the understanding of local community leaders that this is an essential way to do business.

- Transit for and between urban areas is essential for communities: This will help Michigan become more efficient and attract the kind of talent that is needed for a modern economy.
- Detroit is vital to the eventual turn-around for Michigan: This includes mass transit, urban farming, historic preservation and investment in technology and the arts as part of the story of reinventing Michigan's first city and major metro.

We encourage readers to consider what this group of thought leaders has said about moving the state forward, and to continue their conversations with our students in your homes, workplaces and communities.

Riders depart from a trolly service operating in Detroit.

Appendix: MSU Course and Project

HOW THIS INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED

As part of a semester research project, students enrolled in the fall 2011 semester of the Michigan State University course, "Smart Growth and Strategic Land Use Decision-Making," were asked to interview local, state, national or international thought leaders on such topics as economic development, land use, the environment, urban design, government and social justice. There were three primary purposes for this assignment:

- To promote contact between students and leaders, so that students can feel more comfortable with leaders and leadership thinking;
- To broaden the scope of a student's education by enabling them to learn more about issues presented in class in greater depth and from a statewide perspective; and
- To enhance the preparedness of students to become future leaders themselves through a better understanding of how leaders think and act.

Students were provided with a list of notable state leaders but encouraged to explore beyond this list. With the aid of course professors, Dr. Soji Adelaja, the John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor in Land Policy; and Dr. John Warbach, the students each prepared a series of questions to ask their interview subject, based on that person's background and expertise and issues discussed in the course. In addition, they were required to ask the following specific questions:

- What is your view of how the land use and policy areas you have been involved with have changed over time?
- What do you think are opportunities for Michigan, as an example of a distressed place, to recover?

The comments the students received from their subjects were intriguing, timely and of great potential value to policy makers in Michigan, other distressed states and the nation. Therefore, this publication is a compilation of edited interview results reported by the students.

Photos by iStock front cover, pgs. 32 and 38 ; Michigan Municipal League pgs. 1. 6, 8, 11, 13, 17, 20, 22, 27, 29, 35 and 42; and Michigan State University pg. 24.

Special Report Series

This Special Report is available for download at www.landpolicy.msu.edu/MovingMIForwardSpecialReport2011.

This publication is the third produced as part of the MSU Smart Growth course special report series. The first report featured interviews from national thought leaders on such topics as economic development, land use, the environment, urban design, government and social justice. It is available online at www.landpolicy.msu.edu/MovingMIForwardSpecialReport.

The second report featured interviews from Michigan-based thought leaders on the same topics listed above for the first report. It is available online at www.landpolicy.msu.edu/MovingMIForwardSpecialReport2010.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University has been advancing knowledge and transforming lives through innovative teaching, research and outreach for more than 150 years. MSU is known internationally as a major public university, with global reach and extraordinary impact. Its 17 degree-granting colleges attract scholars worldwide who are interested in combining education with practical problem solving. www.msu.edu

Land Policy Institute

The Land Policy Institute partners with the School of Planning, Design and Construction at Michigan State University to provide policy makers at the federal, state, local level and beyond with science-based tools and solutions that help build a better quality of life, strengthen the economy and protect the environment in ways that are fair to all. The LPI works to encourage collaboration among land use researchers, policy makers and community organizations. www.landpolicy.msu.edu

School of Planning, Design and Construction

The School of Planning Design and Construction will be known for leading education, research and outreach towards the integration of planning, design and construction to create a sustainable built and natural environment. The goal of SPDC is to create knowledge that enriches communities, advances economic and family life through leadership, fosters the development of entrepreneurial creativity, imbues a sense of social responsibility, promotes the appreciation of cultural relevance, and above all, advances the understanding of environmentally beneficial planning, design and construction. www.spdc.msu.edu

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Land Policy Institute

Land Policy Institute
Michigan State University
Human Ecology Building
552 W. Circle Drive, Room 112
East Lansing, MI 48824

517.432.8800
517.432.8769 fax

www.landpolicy.msu.edu