Michigan Cool Cities

Michigan Cool Cities Initial Report
Office of the Governor

Michigan Cool Cities

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Michigan Cool Cities

Dear Michigan Cool Cities Partners,

In my initial letter to Michigan Mayors inviting them to participate in the cool cities effort, I asked the question what makes a city "cool"? We understood the best place to look for the answer to this question was at the local level and that the answer could, and indeed should, vary widely.

We are learning; however, that while there are many different and unique definitions and interpretations, there are also great areas of agreement with some strong common themes emerging. One of the most heartening of these is the widespread understanding that cool cities must welcome and encourage diversity.

As many of you know from attending the "Creating Cool" Conference on December 11, 2003, building vibrant, energetic cities that attract jobs, people, and opportunity to our state is a key component of my economic and cultural vision for Michigan. As we have moved forward with our cool cities efforts, I am convinced it is a vision we all share. Revitalized cities will not only open new horizons for urban residents, they also enhance our effort to preserve the green space that surrounds our metropolitan areas and attract the diverse mix of workers so essential to our new knowledge-driven economy, both critical components in building a strong economy for the future.

We are energized by the buzz the Cool Cities initiatives are generating and heartened and excited by the responses we have received from cities thus far. It is very clear, even at this early stage in the process, we are in the midst of movement that I believe will result in our finding dynamic ways to make people – and particularly young people – more interested in living, working, and shopping in Michigan cities.

This is a work in progress. The following information, based on the responses we received from you, is just a starting point but offers a wonderful springboard for the efforts of this advisory group and gives us some great information upon which to guide our work. This report represents the responses we received from more than 40 cities that completed and returned the cool cities questionnaires. We will continue to add to this database as we receive responses from additional cities.

Your efforts are greatly appreciated and I thank you for helping us build the cool cities that will transform Michigan into a magnet for economic growth and opportunity.

Sincerely,

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm

Michigan Cool Cities

A Cool City...

Offers a 'Sense of Place' where people can enjoy entertainment, socialize, recreate, and absorb culture, the arts, and historic architecture.

A Cool City...

Offers good jobs, creative opportunities, diverse housing and is wired for technology.

A Cool City...

Is development-friendly – stimulating capital investment.

A Cool City...

Works hard to keep the residents it has while welcoming new residents. It works hard to leverage its resources creatively and has a well articulated image campaign.

A Cool City...

Is 24-7, or something close to it. It is dynamic with a synergistic vibrancy.

A Cool City...

Is unique!

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Cool Cities Overview

This report is the beginning of a "cool" adventure. It is intended as a working document and a conversation starter as we work together in Michigan to turn this state into what the city of Ferndale suggested should be, the "Great Lakes, Great Cities!" state.

It is a work in progress. It is part of our effort to reach out to Michigan cities through their leadership and local "cool city" advisory groups to learn what they think will make their cities more attractive to young job seekers, job creators, and urban pioneers. In essence, we want the cities to tell us what is cool to you?

This is about creating hot jobs in cool neighborhoods throughout Michigan. It's about attracting and encouraging people – especially young people – to live, work, and shop in the cool cities we are working hard to create.

Through this process, we want to learn how the state can best help our cities become magnets for economic growth and opportunity. Along the way, we want to discover the essence of what makes a vibrant city and help communities as they work to capture a sense of place; building on their community's unique strengths and characteristics and improving the quality of life for all residents and visitors alike.

The Cool City banner is a fun way to describe a very serious mission. To thrive in the future, Michigan cities must attract urban pioneers and young knowledge-workers who are a driving force for economic development and growth. These individuals are mobile and we want them to consider, and then choose, Michigan cities. To do this, we need to change some of our old ways of thinking by making quality of place a major component of economic development efforts.

Cities and regions with large numbers of urban pioneers, or what author Dr. Richard Florida describes as the "Creative Class", are thriving. Build a cool city and they - young knowledge-workers and other creative class members – will come. As Hewlett Packard CEO Carly Fiorina put it, "Keep your tax incentives and highway interchanges – we will go where the highly skilled people are."

We have already gathered some great information and, more importantly, some very creative people to help us as we work together to create cool cities that will serve as magnets for jobs and people – now that's cool...

Contact Information: We are in the process of establishing a Cool Cities office in the Department of Labor & Economic Growth. In the meantime, for further information on this report or other aspects of the Cool Cities initiative, you can email mediainfo@michigan.gov or call the DLEG Media and Public Relations office at 517.373.9280.

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Cool Cities Executive Summary Methodology

Background

At the "State of the State" address, Governor Granholm made it known to all of Michigan that her administration would pursue an initiative to create "Cool Cities" throughout the state, in part as an urban strategy to revitalize communities, build community spirit, and most importantly, retain our "knowledge workers" who were departing Michigan in alarming numbers.

During the 2003 Mackinac conference, Governor Granholm announced the time is now for "Cool Cities".... and Michigan responded.

The Governor invited cities across Michigan to participate in the state's "Cool Cities Initiative" (CCI) with an overwhelming response from almost 80 cities, so far (see attached map). As the *Cool City Movement* continues, we anticipate additional cities requesting participation.

Each participant city was instructed to form a "Local Cool Cities Advisory Group" (LCCAG) reflective of the rich diversity and talent within their respective areas of the state. They were asked to provide details regarding their initiatives so they can be incorporated into this report and shared with others.

On November 20, 2003, the first meeting of the Cool Cities State Advisory Group was held. Cities from around the state attended, along with Governor Granholm and state officials, including representatives from History Arts and Libraries and the newly formed Department of Labor & Economic Growth, that encompasses both the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. An overview of the themes extracted from the survey instrument sent to cities was discussed. The information was a summation of this report and reflected responses from nearly 60 percent of the cities participating.

At the Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs' 9th Annual Conference, titled "Creating Cool", more than 1,300 participants heard Dr. Richard Florida, author of The Rise of the Creative Class, articulate the merits of an economic development strategy that puts "creative" people first, acknowledging the link between economic prosperity and the "Creative Class".

To assist the cultivation of "Cool Cities", the Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG), formerly known as the Department of Consumer & Industry Services, will coordinate "one-stop" activities for those cities and interested parties making inquiry regarding state administered programs. (For now, these inquiries are being routed through the DLEG media and public relations office.)

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DLEG together with the Governor's office has launched a web-based survey called www.michigancoolcities.com that is gathering information from recent college graduates and students, as well as others, on what type of lifestyle they are looking for in a community. This first ever survey has been well received and should provide extremely useful data that can be used in support of Cool Cities efforts.

Organization

The data captured identified the following main topics:

> **Qualities** (historic preservation, mixed-use development, land use, adaptive re-use, walkable communities, inclusion/tolerance, arts and culture, and business development. Other qualities most identified by the responding cities were: variety of ethnic restaurants, affordable housing, safety, and a diverse population.)
> **Initiatives/Plans**
> **Attraction/Retention Strategies**
> **Benefits of Initiative(s)**
> **Challenges**
> **Recommendations to the State**

The responses were reviewed, compared, and organized by representatives from the Department of Labor & Economic Growth and the Governor's Office. All of the responses may not be included; however, most of the key concepts have been captured.

Qualifying Statement

This report includes responses from more than 40 cities. Information gathered from the respondents is reflected in the qualitative interpretation of this report. This is not a scientific analysis.

Qualities

We asked the advisory groups to check the following qualities that apply to their initiatives. The **three** qualities most identified are *Walkable Communities*, *Business Development*, and *Arts and Culture*.

- Historic Preservation
- Mixed – Use Development (Example: Retail/Residential)
- Land Re-utilization
- Adaptive Re-use of Existing Structures
- Walkable Communities
- Inclusion/Tolerance
- Arts and Culture
- Business Development

Cool Cities Analysis: City Qualities

Quality	Percentage
Hist Pres	69%
Mixed-Use	63%
Land Re-use	58%
Re-use of Existing	55%
Walkable	83%
Inclusion	35%
Arts	78%
BusDev	80%
Other	49%
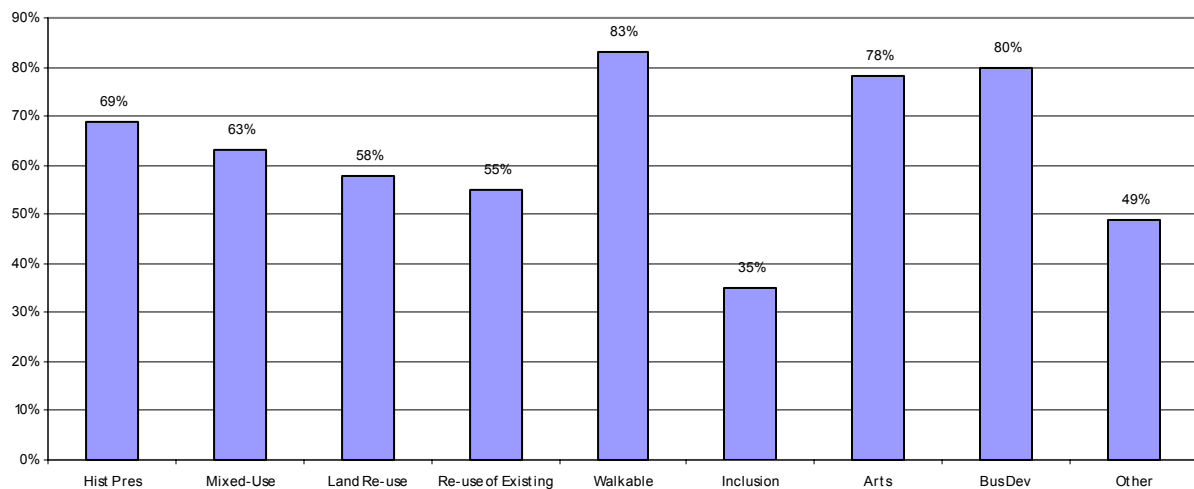
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The majority of the cities provided lists of additional qualities that their initiatives would produce or that they already possess. Additional qualities *most often identified* were **a variety of ethnic cuisine establishments, affordable housing options, safety,** and **diverse populations.**

Identified Qualities of Urban Living

- Diverse populations, mix of ages, cultures, incomes
- Affordable and mixed-housing options
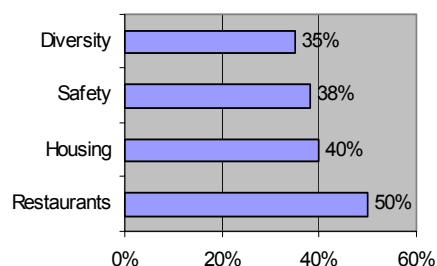- Historical Buildings / Character
- Distinct Neighborhoods
- Buildings occupied, space for new buildings
- Town or city center with restaurants, shopping, theatres, music and dance venues

Other Qualities Most Identified by Responding Cities

Quality	Percentage
Diversity	35%
Safety	38%
Housing	40%
Restaurants	50%

(axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%)

Identified Environment/Atmosphere Qualities

- Safe, clean, well maintained
- Adequate and attractive natural resources
- Walkable between commercial and residential
- Environmental design in pedestrian scale
- Multi-cultural, diverse, friendly
- Urban character with small town feel
- Attractive buildings, landscapes, etc.
- Utilize state resources to redevelop private space
- Open space preservation
- Greenway, bike path, development
- Waterfront and water-connecting development
- Architectural character (new blends with old)
- Vibrant, busy, bright lights
- Defined neighborhoods
- Intellectually stimulating

"More than anything, Grand Rapids needs to accept and promote diversity and inclusiveness, of all ethnic groups, lifestyles, religions, and sexual orientation, as well as, entertainment, music, and restaurants." – from Grand Rapids

Identified Qualities of Activities/Arts/Entertainment

- Designs that foster gathering places
- Active downtown, can just walk around and can find something to do, no planning necessary
- Volunteerism opportunities / programs
- Unique art venues, public art displays
- Museums, theaters, art performance, comedy, poetry, music venues
- Recreational / Athletic venues, i.e., bike, walking trail system, athletic facilities, sporting events, aquatic park, soccer complex, skateboard park, etc.
- Variety of restaurant / ethnic cuisine
- Exciting things to do – nightclubs, pubs, coffee shops, arcades, etc.

- Shopping – unique stores, independent shops, markets
- Concerts, movies in the park
- Events and Festivals, i.e., film, folk, outdoor, jazz, etc.
- Balance of daytime/nighttime activities and year-round
- Top notch public library
- Public lectures
- Prime-time program for older adults and youth programs
- Active historical society
- Free wireless IT service in downtown plazas
- Increased tourism

Identified Qualities that Foster Cooperation
- Creative leadership development
- Customer-focused city government/convenient, longer service hours
- Nurture creativity, especially young persons
- City keeps residents informed
- Local government willingness to enhance/develop city, active, friendly, and approachable
- Community partnerships with adjacent cities, businesses, organizations, etc.
- Strong community groups, social organizations, youth programs
- Excellent schools, university and nearby colleges that provide educational opportunities for persons of all ages
- Daycare and before/after school care programs
- City-supported vision of lively downtown center
- Community policing
- Community Relations Coalition and Pride Teams
- Active citizens
- Community building through grassroots war on poverty campaign
- Local police meet with students to establish relationships and trust

> "The city looks forward to gaining insight and assistance from the efforts of other communities around the State of Michigan as we look for collaborative approaches to revitalizing our urban centers." – from Holland

Other Identified Amenities
- Efficient transportation from outside into city core
- Transportation transitions, parking to subway to bus, bike and pedestrian trails
- Adequate municipal convenient parking
- Well-established public facilities, public safety, State Police posts, etc.
- Special attractions, i.e., New Veterans Memorial Park, fountains, etc.
- Cutting edge technology
- Extensive recycling services

- Close to bodies of water
- Deep-sea port
- National park gateway
- Diverse places of worship
- New space for retail/residents at City Center Project
- Enforcement of property maintenance code to maintain properties to certain standards
- Hardworking potential labor force
- Access to health care

Qualities Most Selected - by City Size

	Mix-use Development	Walkable Communities	Arts & Culture	Business Development	Historic Preservation
Large City	100%	100%	100%	100%	66%
Medium City	50%	71%	71%	64%	64%
Small City	60%	87%	73%	87%	73%
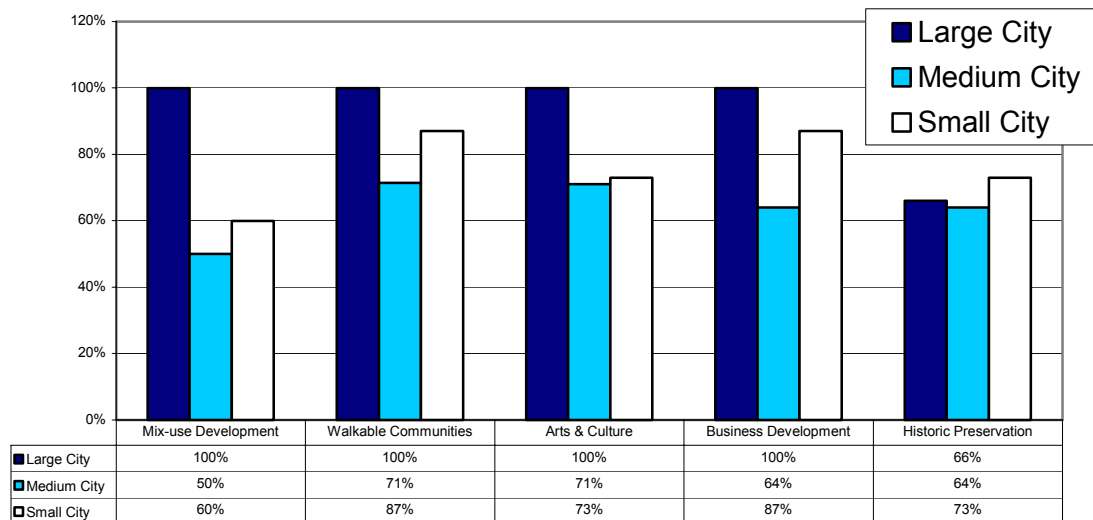
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Initiatives/Plans

Arts, Culture, and Entertainment

Cities want entertainment options to be available to the community. One city mentioned reimagining the downtown infrastructure to support street life and culture. Variety in entertainment alternatives, such as offering restaurants, unique bars, coffee houses, street festivals, community fairs, theaters, community activities and a general "street life" theme is a must for most cities. Outdoor dining is an often-cited benefit to downtown business. Offering lots of personal services such as spas, salons, eateries, grocers, specialty retail and financial .

Cities want entertainment activities to be available at all hours and they generally want more of them in their cities. Extending the retail hours for clubs and diners so that people can enjoy nightlife in the downtown was a reoccurring theme throughout the city responses.   Summer concert series were a popular suggestion for outdoor community entertainment.

- Nightlife is important: People are busy during the day, they play at night; i.e., in Italy things stay open late, fountain plazas attract people at all hours.
- Grand Rapids created an Arts and Entertainment district with the help of a Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Grant.
- Provide numerous festivals and programs for children
- Muskegon hopes to create an arts incubator

> "To create a downtown that is exciting and doesn't roll up the sidewalks at 5 p.m., we have worked to develop a downtown where you can work, live and play without the need to get in your car and drive somewhere else." – from Mt. Clemens

Recreation

Keeping parks clean and attractive for residents and visitors is a priority for many cities.

- Creating a one-stop shop for cultural and recreational activities
- Facilitating events like intramural sports programs
- Attract new and unusual attractions; i.e., rock walls, annual 10K run

Walkable/Pedestrian Friendly Communities

Creating more pedestrian-friendly districts in cities was a common cool city theme. Increasing the walkability of the downtown area for cities included increased connectivity of key areas like waterfront corridors, city parks, and museums to the downtown area. Convenience for walkers, bikers, and skaters was also important to cities so that they can access the downtown area.

- Jackson is creating a River Arts Walk connecting the Arts Armory to Consumers Energy headquarters.
- Jackson established a Walkable Communities Task Force, which implemented a FootEnergy program and a destination-based bicycle route.

Revitalization of Vacant and Obsolete Buildings and Downtowns

Cities are focusing redevelopment on their main streets, downtown districts, and near downtown neighborhoods. They hope to develop a vibrant downtown core for business, retail and housing. Across Michigan, cities are revitalizing buildings in their central cities into living spaces, businesses, and retail spaces. Cities are then promoting these residential districts in their downtown areas. As cities work to revitalize urban workspaces for businesses, they are also revitalizing the existing infrastructure. High-speed intranet, new wireless broadband to access the world, and Wi-Fi access in the downtown area are examples of high tech infrastructure cities are planning to bring to their downtowns.

- Royal Oak is currently working on plans to bring Wi-Fi to the downtown as an economic development tool to attract more residential development and as an added incentive for business.
- St. Joseph is converting an early 1900's factory into a center for the arts and a residential condominium complex.
- Jackson wants to keep the downtown area open on Sundays.
- Farmington formed a committee to expand programming/use of their historic downtown civic theatre.

Promotion/Image Growth of City

Cities plan to promote what is already great about their city. Natural assets like lakefront property, waterfront parks, "small town atmosphere", are all assets cities want to promote. Define what cool means to a city and then promote it is a common strategy for attracting residents and visitors to cities. Cities want to develop a coordinated marketing strategy for the cultural and recreation opportunities that exists in their city or region to attract visitors and residents. Some feel it is important to address negative image perspectives of their city.

> "Cool cities that attract and retain youth need a bit of an edge, an urban feel, the best are walkable with several options for transportation choice... variety/diversity in terms of shopping, dining, night life, people, entertainment, affordable housing... the coolest places are often densely populated, good places for people watching..." – from Ferndale

Cities want to build on a sense of loyalty in the community and a city's sense of volunteerism to attract and retain people. Maintaining and promoting this sense of community was important to many cities.

Detroit is planning a March 2004 "Regional Transformation Workshop" with Dr. Richard Florida. They also have an initiative named Detroit Synergy to "generate positive perceptions and opinions about Detroit by bringing together a diverse community and building upon the City's strengths and resources to realize a common vision for a greater Detroit, www.createdetroit.com "

- Support "Destination Jackson" to establish Jackson as a year round southeastern Michigan destination for arts, culture, entertainment, recreation and sports.
- "I Am Detroit!" campaign

Get Young People Involved

- Jackson hopes to establish an internship program for young people to work in City departments
- Educate young people in the local schools on the importance of supporting the local economy and becoming involved in local activities.
- Grand Rapids is founding a Grand Rapids Young Professionals Group
- Make it a "creative thinking town" for all ages
- Develop an economic strategy based on creating a critical mass of young professionals in the downtown
- Young Friends of Woodward (YFoW) is a non-profit organization consisting of successful young professionals dedicated to the health and positive growth of its revitalization of the Detroit comprised of ages 22 – 35, www.yfow.org
- Farmington has a Mayor's Youth Council and Commission on Children, Youth and Families. They met with several youth groups for their input of what Farmington needs to become a cool city.

"Lansing is home to a richly diverse population, and one with abundant creative talent; unfortunately we do not do nearly enough to nurture and retain the talent or acknowledge the diversity....To make Lansing a cool city, there needs to be an intentional effort by leaders and citizens to support artistic development." – from Lansing

Grow Downtown Businesses

Cities are working to grow downtown businesses. Some cities are focusing on startup businesses and creating incubator space for entrepreneurs. Cities are working to attract quality jobs in the biotech, research and development, and natural resource-based companies.

- Creating a retail incubator through a retail mentor board

- St. Joseph is promoting Cornerstone Chamber Service's "concierge level" relocation services which gives relocation assistance to individuals recruited by local businesses.
- Monroe plans to have a contest asking for the best ideas to help downtown businesses with the winner receiving six months free rent from the city
- Diversify the Jackson economy by creating, as part of the armory project, an innovation center to house companies and startup businesses

Transportation

Cities mention the need to improve transportation but they do not give ideas about how to do it.

- Lansing hopes to create innovative transportation options for both night and day

Tolerance/Inclusion

- Grand Rapids is working with the World Affairs Council, a young professionals program, to promote and explore understanding of different ethnic cultures.
- Local businesses/city government should periodically review the products and services they provide to see if they match their population, i.e., are minorities shopping and getting services from a different city because there is nothing available where they live?

"Detroit's cool opportunities include capitalizing on its strengths including "arts and culture, universities and libraries, passion for the city, spirit of the residents, diversity of ethnic groups in the region, parks, lakes and waterways, golf course, festivals, Detroit's waterfront and strong belief that Detroit can change its image." – from Detroit

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Average Population Age of Responding Cities

Legend:
- ☐ Under 30
- ■ 30-35
- ☐ 35-40
- ▨ Above 40
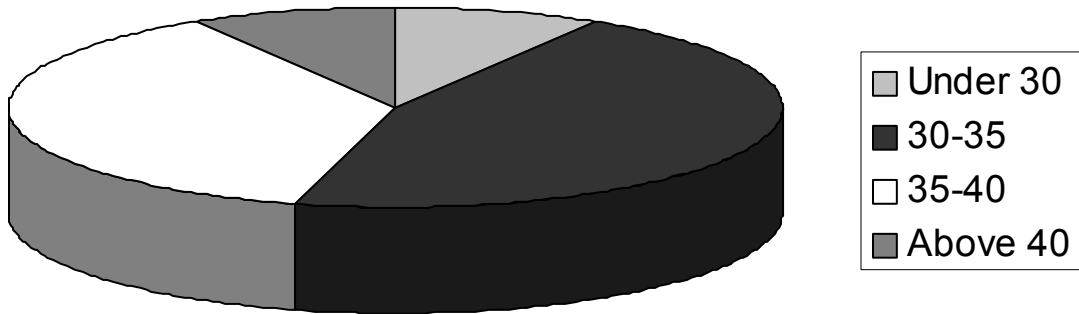
Note: The majority of responding cities have an average age population between 30-40.

Attraction/Retention Strategies

The Michigan cities that responded reported a variety of efforts they are using to attract and retain residents, visitors, and businesses to their communities. Interestingly, several communities cited efforts underway to promote tolerance and diversity and build cities that are attractive to a wide range of age groups including teens and young professionals.

Creating walkable, livable cities offering a variety of shopping, leisure, and work activities were at the core of many of the attraction and retention strategies offered. Those communities with a stock of historical buildings or waterfront, zeroed in on strategies that maximized these amenities. Some of these strategies included efforts to protect, renovate, and creatively reuse older buildings along the waterfront and host events near the waterfront.

At least 17 communities cited housing as one of their primary attraction and retention strategies. Housing examples included efforts to create more affordable, mixed use, and urban housing options in a wide range of sizes and price ranges. Several cited efforts to convert former office spaces over retail shops into lofts and apartments.

To make their communities more livable and attractive, many communities are actively seeking more restaurant choices, artists and galleries, entertainment offerings for all age groups, and as one city put it "exciting nightlife that doesn't roll up sidewalks at 5:00 p.m." The city of Cadillac reported that it has created a Frisbee golf course that has been extremely well received by younger residents and is in the process of putting in a skate park.

"Southfield's logo, "Southfield – The Center of it all!" gives residents and visitors alike the idea that Southfield has everything you need to have a successful life. We have a wide variety of businesses that cater to many resident needs; our population is diverse; and we have city services that cater to people of all ages." – from Southfield

Several cities reported efforts to attract movies, nightclubs, bars, and family entertainment to their core business districts and a half dozen cited active efforts to attract and promote the arts and cultural events as part of attraction efforts, in addition to promoting special events like festivals and fairs.

Education was cited by a number of cities as a key strategy. Several communities cited efforts to capitalize on existing institutions of higher education and one city spoke of its effort to attract an institution of higher education as part of its attraction and retention strategy.

Many respondents cited efforts to revitalize and expand opportunities in their core areas by focusing on downtowns and trying to help retain businesses already located there and attract others to minimize downtown vacancies. Several noted they were trying to attract service

businesses like laundromats and bookstores to support those living in downtown or urban neighborhoods.

A number of cities also cited efforts to make their cities pedestrian-friendly by making it easy to park the car and walk to a variety of destinations and making the trip on foot safer and more aesthetically pleasing by improving lighting and landscaping. Some cities reported efforts to improve mass transit and city services as key components in their retention and attraction efforts. Services included revamping zoning and the permitting processes and improving or maintaining excellent fire, police, and other municipal services and strictly enforcing ordinances to keep its core city area clean and attractive. Others cited efforts to use Community Development Block Grant and Brownfield Development dollars for redevelopment projects. And one community, Farmington Hills, is exploring the idea of scholarships from local businesses and organizations to keep young people in the area and in Michigan after graduation.

> "These coolest cities had many characteristics in common: great nightlife, personal sporting and cultural opportunities, and good quality infrastructure and buildings. These cities were walk-able communities, offering diverse opportunities for entertainment, shopping and recreation. ...The 'people' who lived in these cool cities had a lot to do with the participants' image of those suggested: friendly, home town proud and welcoming."
> – from Frankenmuth

High tech also played a role in a number of city's attraction and retention strategies. Some reported efforts to attract high-tech workers, while others reported efforts to become wired and high tech friendly. One cited efforts to attract high-skilled jobs for mature workers, not just those in IT.

Several cities cited branding and image building as central to their efforts, noting they have good things to offer but need to do a better job of spreading the word and improving their image.

There were some cities with large student populations that included representatives on their local groups for input on cool cities. For example, Big Rapids recruited young professionals between the ages of 25 and 35. They identified attraction/retention strategies for young people ranging from affordable housing, cooperative city government, increase of business and minority businesses, volunteerism, utilizing the local university to increase cultural diversity and opportunities, utilizing the local hospital to attract young professionals, establish a community youth group, bring a comedy club business to town, more day care options, broadband access, etc. They identified their community as a mix of small town space and feel with amenities.

In general, the cities had a strong sense that they need to be very strategic and focused on the unique strengths they have as a community, whether it's a convenient location, strong arts community, or a beautiful location next to a lake or a river.

Benefits of Initiative

Respondents listed what they believed the benefits of the "cool cities" initiative would provide their community, city, and in certain cases, their region. Listed below are the fourteen (14) categories within the "benefits of initiative" grouped responses.

> Economic Development/Business Climate Improvement
> Arts and Culture Support/Development
> Diverse/Affordable Housing – Rebuilding Neighborhoods
> Wireless Technology (Access to Internet)/Broadband
> Mixed-use Development
> Branding of Community/Image Campaign
> Community/Regional Collaboration
> Funding
> Education/Tolerance
> Historic Preservation
> Public Safety/Transportation Improvements
> Tourism
> Attraction/Retention of Population (primary focus - young adults)
> Anti-Sprawl

Of the 44 communities that submitted information regarding their "cool cities" initiative, twenty-two (22) completed the section regarding perceived benefits. Below is a listing, by category, of expected benefits of the "cool cities" initiative.

Economic Development/Business Climate Improvement
- Bring back a sense of a "traditional" downtown, which generates a positive atmosphere/environment and attracts businesses, customers, residents, and visitors.
- Establish a business incubator to exchange new ideas and support business ventures. Coordinate resources to support new business development and emerging technologies. Entrepreneurs with the best ideas are matched up with "cool cities" that are best able to support their future development.
- Innovation Centers.
- Promote economic diversity.
- Stronger business environment will have a positive impact on local and county taxes, expansion of the tax base.

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- Include young people as part of the economic community, recognizing their impact on many levels, consumer, resident (renter/homeowner), workforce, entrepreneur, etc.
- Capture the uniqueness and value of natural resources; i.e., rivers, waterways, lakes, etc., in economic development strategies.
- Use the "cool cities" initiative to identify strategies for the city/region's economic strategic plan.
- Create new jobs, and retain existing jobs within the community. Increase the wage earning potential of workers.

> "It's amazing how something as simple as a park can be viewed as "Cool." ...An investment in the city parks or Town Square would do wonders for the local people." – from Flint

Arts and Culture Support/Development
- Promote a rebirth of entertainment, restaurants, bars, retail businesses, residential and office markets, making downtown the center of entertainment.
- Support "busking initiatives", street/sidewalk entertainers that are legally able to encourage financial support for their performances.
- A centralized ("district") artist community may evolve.

Diverse/Affordable Housing – Rebuilding Neighborhoods
- Increased community awareness of downtown living options. Expect improvement in older neighborhoods that have experienced disinvestments over the years.
- Increase in residential property values and repopulation of older neighborhoods by urban pioneers.
- In-fill housing on vacant lots and neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- Work with landlords to provide affordable, attractive, well-maintained housing, especially for students

> "An affordable housing appeal to all age groups, especially young couples just starting out. Bringing new people to our community would enhance the economic well-being of our community and attract new business." – from Pontiac

Wireless Technology (Access to Internet)/Broadband
Drive local Internet traffic to their website by sponsoring "Access Points" targeting demographics that they are interested in. Local events can be advertised within a specific geographic area of Wi-Fi users and local underwriters can help support the "free" Wi-Fi system.

Mixed-use Development
- "Live/Work Housing Initiative" that combines living and working spaces. Offer advantages of home-based business in a dynamic commercial environment. Provide incentives to foster mixed-use districts to increase the density of entrepreneurs as business owners/homeowners (residents).

- Increase opportunities for residents to work, socialize and recreate closer to home.
- The Armory project in Jackson is expected to improve the quality of life for Jackson residents.
- Mixed-use development, with sufficient density, brings businesses, employees and residents together, typically within walking distance. This allows for a more diverse community and creates a safer more engaged populace.
- Foster a "user-friendly" community. Pride in ownership.

Branding of Community/Image Campaign
- Create a stronger community identity with a focus on economic diversity.
- Create a destination image for residents and visitors.
- Capitalize on what's "cool" and "unique". Develop a "sense of place."
- Build community pride and self-esteem.
- Create excitement in the minds of young professionals that Michigan is the place to live, work, and play. Overcome negative perceptions of Michigan, encourage business to remain, expand and locate in Michigan.

Community/Regional Collaboration
- Stronger community/region.
- Build a dynamic organized effort that fosters "engagement, inclusion, and mobilization."
- Enhance the interaction among citizens of all age groups.
- Downtown can be the focus of the region.

Funding
- Small Business Start-up Authority could leverage existing federal, state, and local resources with private lenders, and the Small Business Association, to provide loan guarantees to help new and existing business access capital.

> "Currently the public transportation in Ludington does not service the Community College, this is seen as a major shortfall. Looking at cities like Washington D.C. or Chicago, young professionals can easily exist and do a number of activities without the need for a private vehicle." – from Ludington

Education/Tolerance
- Establish a grassroots "war on poverty". Increase awareness regarding the challenges of low-income demographics.

Historic Preservation
- Recapture history through the restoration of historic structures.
- Historic preservation, and adaptive re-use, helps to curb continued urban sprawl.

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Public Safety/Transportation Improvements
- Changes in traffic flow/direction could provide easier customer access and ensure visibility without excessive signage.
- Develop convenient, safe and attractive parking areas.

Tourism
- Increase in cultural and heritage tourism centered on the arts, community heritage/uniqueness and historic preservation.

Attraction/Retention of Population (primary focus - young adults)
- Encourage economic development that results in jobs that attract young people.
- Increased vibrancy attracts visitors, especially a younger audience.
- Retain young adults.
- Interactive meetings that bring groups of people together to plan diverse community events and programs that appeal to all ages.

> "Cadillac has a cool Frisbee golf course, is planning a skate park, and has a developing YMCA program, all of which appeal to young people." – from Cadillac

Anti-Sprawl
- Stop sprawl.
- Utilize Brownfield Redevelopment to reclaim urban/downtown sites.

Michigan Cool Cities

Challenges

Following is a list of reported challenges that has either been met or that currently exist.

- Funding
- Existing Image/Marketing
- "Our city is branded a "tulip place," not really high on the "cool" scale."
- Lack of awareness of quality of life
- Information center
- Directional signage
- Website/Internet

Consumer Attraction
- Parking
- Housing (downtown, multi-housing options, mixed income, depressed residential housing market)
- Technology (internet, wireless communications)
- Tourism
- Public Transportation
- Provide services to a wide area
- Improve public facilities, including restrooms
- Create town-like environment

> "We are in the process of restoring our historic 1888 railroad depot. To be located along the railroad tracks along M-57 within the streetscape enhancement area, the depot will become the trailhead of our non-motorized path winding throughout the entire community."
> – from Montrose

Vacant Buildings/Blight
- Preservation of historical heritage
- Buildings in poor condition don't justify private investment
- Absentee landlords
- Land-locked mostly developed tiny central city
- Aging commercial area
- Brownfield areas
- Need in-fill development and façade improvements

Attracting Young Persons/Professionals
- Jobs that attract young persons
- Affordable housing options
- Some areas too conservative
- Local college/university decrease in enrollment
- Activities/Recreation geared towards young persons
- Briefcase City (people come to work in the city and then leave after work)
- Downtown entertainment

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Regional Cooperation/Networking
- No single source of cultural or recreational information
- Social networking opportunities
- Educational opportunities

Land Use Challenges
- Federal highway divides city
- City entrance bordered by a railroad yard
- Urban sprawl
- Historic Preservation
- Mixed – Use Development (Example: Retail/Residential)
- Land Re-utilization
- Adaptive Re-use of Existing Structures
- Walkable Communities
- Inclusion/Tolerance
- Arts and Culture
- Business Development

> "What defines a 'cool' city? …They expose residents and visitors to new or unique cultures; They provide world-class services in entertainment, food, museums, shopping, sports and recreation; They are openly accepting of diversity in lifestyles, needs and interests of both residents and visitors; They are enthusiastically supportive of the arts and often have grown out of artist communities or enclaves."
> – from East Lansing

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Recommendations to State

Tax Incentives

A number of cities in Michigan are looking to the State of Michigan to provide help with tax incentives for different purposes. These cities have proposed several ways that tax strategies can be used to improve cities:

- Create residential tax incentives, including tax breaks for restoration and home improvement
- Establish tax abatements and incentives to attract businesses to downtown areas and help diversify the economic bases of local communities
- Combine State and Federal tax credits for historic preservation
- Provide incentives for new graduates to work and live in city where they graduate.

Education/Schools

Local communities are looking for ways to work with the state in support of their schools. They also would like to see the state focus on "Cool Schools" and provide incentives to keep schools in low-income neighborhoods.

Transportation

The cities participating in the survey indicated support for transportation initiatives to aid in creating more livable communities. These proposals include:

- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) assist in clarifying jurisdiction over local transportation projects
- Encourage cooperation between MDOT and local entities to incorporate context sensitive design in transportation planning
- Improving signage to help people find cities more easily
- Continued support for regional mass transit
- Continue working to recoup more federal gas tax dollars
- Encourage pedestrian and non-motorized access to thoroughfares
- Continue "Fix-It-First, Fix-It-Right" Strategy

Branding/Promotion

Several cities in this survey recommended that the State develop a "brand" for the State of Michigan. They also proposed that the State take a more active role in promoting itself regionally, nationally, and internationally. Some of the recommendations include:

- Develop a "Michigan" brand image to make the State stand out from other Midwest states and market Michigan to the rest of the nation; this could be done through television, radio, print and web-based marketing materials; this campaign should emphasize the diversity of the State, and target young, hip people
- Welcome signs at Michigan's border should read "Great Lakes, Great Cities!" or "Great Lakes, Cool Cities!"
- Cultivate a cutting-edge reputation

> "Promote our waterfront through the creation of the waterfront walkway, establish more beaches, and market the locations of the current park system."
> – from Sault Ste. Marie

Housing

A number of cities recommended that the State provide support for housing initiatives. These proposals include:

- Tax incentives for property owners to convert downtown structures into urban living spaces
- Update building codes
- Help with financing of housing, particularly loft apartments
- Provide help to make housing in cities more affordable
- Provide help in improving local housing stock
- Help in getting more housing in downtown areas, possibly through increased funding of Core City initiatives
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)/Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) tax credit program for the development of downtown housing
- Live/Work Housing Initiative, working with local communities to increase residential/business density through local zoning ordinances and housing codes
- Provide zero-interest rehab fund for homeowners in historic district to preserve property to historic guidelines
- Create a tax credit program for landlords to Wi-Fi a building
- Develop a State-funding match for the Federal New Market Tax Credit program to encourage commercial development in urban centers

> "A 'cool' city is a city where people want to live and visit. It has a special 'charm' that is difficult to explain but certainly exists." – from East Tawas

Environment

Environmental recommendations include:

- Brownfield redevelopment policies should include incentives for "responsible parties" to clean-up Brownfield sites
- Focus on land use planning and stopping sprawl
- Provide incentives for redevelopment of land

Business/Economic Development

A number of recommendations deal with economic development strategies; these include:

- Provide support for urban tourism
- Provide art, housing, and other development grants
- Incentive programs for the creation of "business incubator space"
- Create positions within cities to tie economic development organizations together with the State (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Committee, Downtown Development Authority, etc.)
- Explore ways Broadband can work with non-profits, Downtown Development Authorities, Main Street organizations, libraries, and local municipalities to provide Wi-Fi services
- Investigate possibility of allowing more beer and wine-only licenses for restaurants
- Promote arts and culture in the State

> "We have created a community environment and infrastructure that supports and nurtures creative leadership – leadership that has the ability to look with fresh eyes at what makes Jackson unique and transform that uniqueness – both assets AND liabilities – into a bright future." – from Jackson

> "The city of Muskegon needs to be a place where one can work, live and play to make this a 24-hour community. We will need a multitude of housing options to accommodate these young professionals. These developments MUST include mixed-income housing, as not every graphic designer will be able to afford a high-rise condo at Edison Landing straight out of college." – from Muskegon

> "A cool city has diversity of culture, professions, and businesses. It has solid infrastructure with potential to grow. It has art in public places and a wide variety of retail shops, restaurants, entertainment, and recreational opportunities. A cool city is safe, friendly, and nurtures creativity. The architecture has value and history associated with it. There is visual appeal with a variety of buildings, sidewalks, street textures, and colors with lots of green space and flowers. A cool city demonstrates cooperation between government, schools, and businesses. Community leadership exhibits a constant willingness to push their community to be different or unique. Community leaders pursue a constant effort to improve the community. It is walkable. There are year-round/day and night activities including special events like concerts, fairs, and parades. People live and work in the downtown. There are alcoves, nooks, and crannies to wander and be discovered, as well as, gathering places for young and old. Storefronts have interactive window displays."
> – from Brighton

Michigan Cool Cities:
Participating Cities
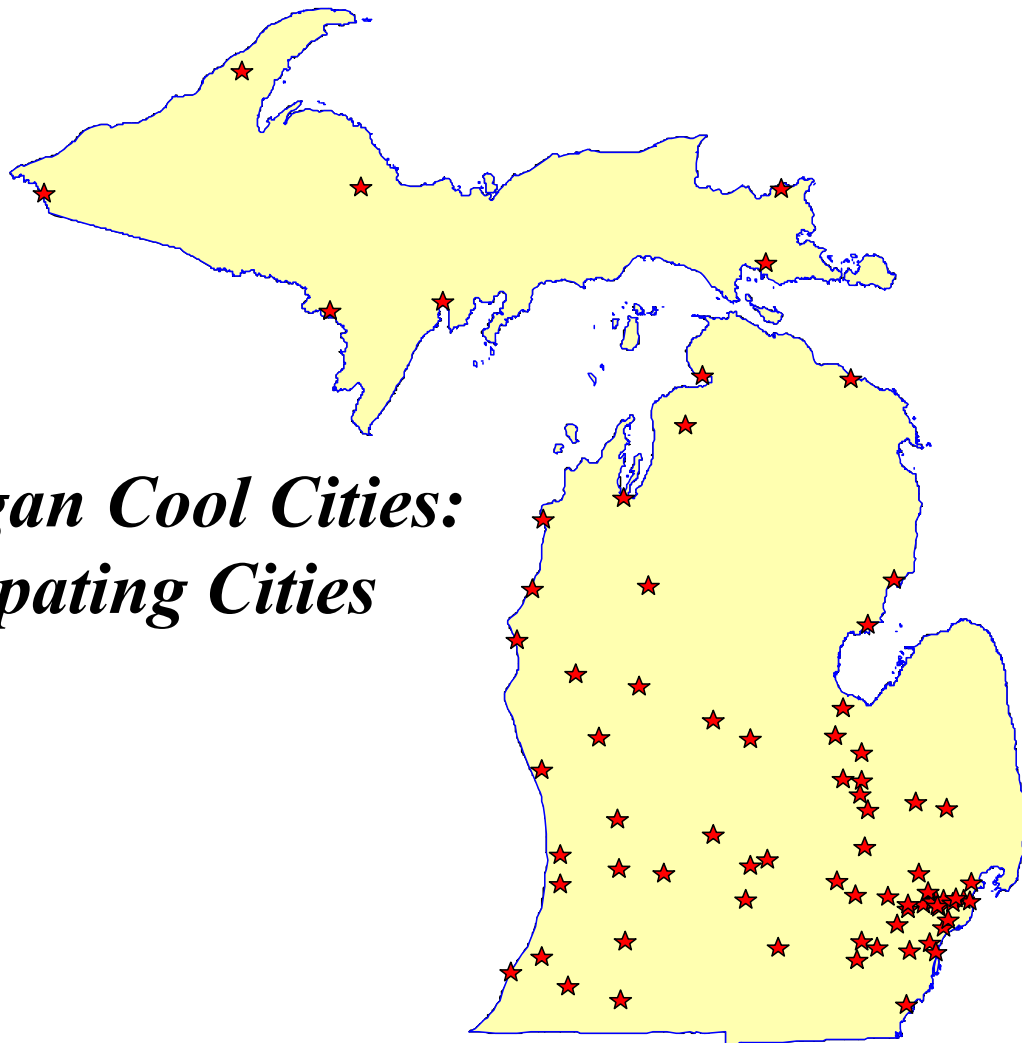
Michigan Cool Cities

Participating Cities

City	Population	City	Population
Allen Park	29376	Lansing	119128
Ann Arbor	114024	Lapeer	9072
Au Gres	1028	Ludington	8357
Bay City	36817	Madison Heights	31101
Berkley	15531	Manistee	6586
Big Rapids	10849	Marquette	19661
Birmingham	19291	Midland	41685
Brighton	6701	Monroe	22076
Cadillac	10000	Montrose	1619
Clio	2483	Mount Clemens	17312
Detroit	951270	Mount Morris	3194
East Jordan	2507	Muskegon	40105
East Lansing	46525	Newaygo	1670
East Tawas	2951	Norway	2959
Eastpointe	34077	Pleasant Ridge	2594
Eaton Rapids	5330	Plymouth	9022
Farmington	10423	Pontiac	66337
Farmington Hills	82111	Portland	3789
Fennville	1459	Rogers City	3322
Fenton	10582	Romulus	22979
Ferndale	22105	Roseville	48129
Flint	124943	Royal Oak	60062
Frankenmuth	4838	Saginaw	61799
Frankfort	1513	Saline	8034
Fremont	4224	Sault Ste. Marie	16542
Gladstone	5032	Southfield	78296
Grand Rapids	197800	St. Clair Shores	63096
Hamtramck	22976	St. Joseph	8789
Hancock	4323	St. Louis	4494
Harbor Springs	1567	Three Rivers	7328
Hastings	7095	Traverse City	14532
Holland	35048	Troy	80959
Howell	9232	Warren	138247
Imlay City	3869	Watervliet	1843
Ironwood	6293	Wayland	3939
Ishpeming	6686	Wayne	19051
Jackson	36316	Wixom	13263
Kalamazoo	77145	Wyandotte	28006
		Ypsilanti	22362