

# Michigan Cool Cities Survey: Summary of Findings

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## **Background**

The survey targeted university students and recent college graduates. E-mail invitations were sent to enrolled students and alumni lists by the Universities to visit a web site at [www.michigancoolcities.com](http://www.michigancoolcities.com) to complete a survey about needs, wants and preferences for a place to live and work. By the end of April, 2004, over 13,500 surveys had been completed.

## **Survey Goals**

Study Michigan university students and recent graduates in order to:

1. Help create a Michigan Approach called “Cool Cities”.
2. Develop information to help Michigan cities use the Cool Cities Initiative as an economic development strategy.
3. Support marketing strategies to create buzz.

The study identifies attributes and needs unique to Michigan. It helps define which parts of Creative Class Theory as set out by Richard Florida in “Rise of the Creative Class” Michigan should implement in order to be successful. It also identifies issues important to becoming Cool Cities that were not included in Creative Class theory. This becomes the basis for the Michigan approach called “Cool Cities”.

These findings are combined with results from the on-line survey, focus groups conducted in four Midwest cities, and the Cool Cities University Summits held by Governor Jennifer Granholm, both held during early 2004. Because the demographic of survey respondents had a strong emphasis on young, single, college-aged students and Michigan residents, interpretation of survey results should be viewed in that light.

## **Basic Demographics of Respondents Analyzed**

- Age Range of Analyzed Respondents: Over 18 and under 35
- Average Age: 23.3 yrs.
  
- Michigan Residents: 85.3%
- Other G.L. States: 6.6%
- All Other: 8.1%
  
- Female: 59.5%
- Male: 40.5%

## Summary of Key Findings

- While job opportunities are important in choosing a place to live, quality of life is significantly more important than many have previously thought. It might be more important to some than jobs.
- Despite concerns periodically expressed about Detroit as a place to live and work, respondents still rate it as the 2nd best place to live in the state. On the national list, survey respondents rate Detroit as the 3rd most preferred place.
- Warm weather year-round is not a critical issue in choosing a place to live. This allows Michigan, once and for all, to dispel the notion that it cannot compete with other warm weather places.
- Being close to family plays an important role in decisions related to choosing a place to live. That importance seems to increase as people age and their lifestyles (i.e., married-w/kids) change. Campaigns using a return-to-home message could be effective.
- A secondary target audience could be graduates of Michigan universities who have left the state. There are often ties to the community where one went to school that could be taken advantage of.
- The survey found that gambling places/casinos, professional sports, large malls and shopping centers, and warm weather do not play a significant role in choosing a place to live.
- Neighborhood preferences tend to favor being in or near a downtown though other types of areas received high ratings as well. Because of this, medium and small cities and even rural areas can effectively compete with large cities for the Creative Class.
- One of the few ways in which the rank ordering of what was important in selecting a place to live varied significantly was by city type preferred. The differences in these listings suggest which attributes a city might want to focus on as its highest priorities when attracting the Creative Class. While there are a few similarities, each type of city can be quite distinctive in what people look for in terms of its key attributes.
- The study identified six major grouping of factors that communities can focus upon in order to target their development priorities. They are:

1. **The Cool Cities Core Values Factor:** This factor is central in defining what constitutes a “Cool City”. Focusing efforts on as many of these attributes as possible will help a community to spur economic growth.
2. **The Outdoor Factor:** This is a grouping of non-team, outdoor sports and the simple yet personal experience of being outdoors. It is a key feature for selecting a place to live. The proximity of many Michigan communities to substantial outdoor recreation assets (lakes, beaches, public forests, trail systems, etc.) means that those communities have a significant and important asset to offer to the Creative Class.
3. **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Factor:** This factor emphasizes the importance of gathering places, a critical component of what appeals to the Creative Class. It is the place where a community or neighborhood meets to develop friendships, discuss issues, and interact with others. It helps the community develop and retain cohesion, and its sense of place. Developing 3<sup>rd</sup> Places can significantly enhance a community’s attractiveness.
4. **Safety and Security Factor:** While key, this factor is probably best to jointly undertake with other development targets, particularly with other factors directly related to Cool Cities Core Values. A place might not necessarily be “cool” simply because it is safe and secure. Yet, it cannot become “cool” if it is not perceived as safe.
5. **Economics Factor:** Like Safety & Security, Economics alone is probably not a driving issue in decisions about places to live, but still important. Because affordability is a highly rated attribute, it might help attract new residents if combined with other important factors. Affordability is the defining attribute related to this factor. It is mostly defined as reasonable housing costs.
6. **Entrepreneurial Factor:** Those who want to start their own business are largely driven by this need to the exclusion of other needs or interests. This relatively small, but economically significant group of people is motivated by other factors, and would probably warrant a separate type of strategy to try to attract.

### Key Demographics

<b>Family Status</b>	<b>%</b>
Single w/ Kids	2.9%
Single no Kids	73.3%
Married w/ Kids	7.0%
Married no Kids	16.8%
TOTALS	100%

- Most respondents were without children (90%).
- Most respondents were single (76%).

<b>School Status</b>	<b>%</b>
Community College	2.1%
Freshman / Sophomore	23.2%
Junior / Senior	36.7%
Graduate Student	14.4%
Graduated w/in 5 yrs.	16.3%
Grad. more than 5 yrs. ago	5.6%
Not a Student	1.7%
TOTALS	100.0%

- Most respondents are still in school.
- While on a percentage basis, the respondents who have graduated are relatively low, the absolute number of respondents is still high even for those who graduated more than 5 years ago. This will allow for helpful subsequent analysis of some of the sub-segments of this market.
- Most respondents are from Michigan colleges and universities.

<b>Standard Occupational Codes Structure</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Education, Training, and Library Occupations</b>	<b>749</b>
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	506
<b>Computer and Mathematical Occupations</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>Architecture and Engineering Occupations</b>	<b>383</b>
Sales and Related Occupations	318
<b>Business and Financial Operations Occupations</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Management Occupations</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Community and Social Services Occupations</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations</b>	<b>121</b>
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	111
Personal Care and Service Occupations	96
Production Occupations	90
Legal Occupations	85
Healthcare Support Occupations	76
Protective Service Occupations	45
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	45
Unemployed, Retired, Student, Homemaker Other Unclassified	38
Construction and Extraction Occupations	32
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	30
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	20
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	20
Military Specific Occupations	17

**Highlighted are knowledge sector jobs.**

- Most respondents who are already in the work force are in Creative Class types of employment.

## Key Findings

### Likelihood of Living in ...

	<u>Likely</u>	<u>Unlikely</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Michigan	54.4%	31.1%	14.5%
The Gr. Lakes Region	55.2%	28.7%	16.0%
The U.S.	90.4%	4.0%	5.6%
Canada or Mexico	14.6%	75.6%	9.8%
Overseas	24.6%	64.5%	10.9%

- About 54% of the respondents said they were likely to life in Michigan. Michigan’s performance in this regard is roughly comparable to most states in the Great Lakes region, with 55% saying they were likely to stay in the one of those states.
- A large portion is undecided. They become one of the key target audiences.
- This type of measure will become one of the baselines for measuring Michigan’s performance in the future.

### Type of Housing Preferred

<u>Housing Preference</u>	<u>%</u>
A House	88.6%
Townhouse/Duplex	42.9%
A Downtown Loft	42.4%
Apartment	39.2%
High-Rise Apt.	31.0%

Percent answering 5,6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

- Given the economic needs of younger, recent college graduates, mixed-use types of housing with a range of pricing alternatives is probably most desirable.
- It is still the American Dream to own your own house, even for the young people in the Creative Class. However, townhouses or a downtown lofts have a strong appeal as well.
- From focus groups and the University Summits we learned that many perceive loft living to be an expensive alternative.

### Type of City Preferred

City Type	%
Near Downtown - Med. City	54.6%
Near Downtown - Lg. City	53.0%
Suburbs - Lg. City	51.0%
Suburbs - Med. City	49.2%
Downtown – Med. City	46.7%
Downtown – Lg. City	38.2%
Small Town	38.1%
Rural Area	36.2%

Percent answering 5,6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

- Neighborhood preferences tend to favor being in or near a downtown area. This preference is probably strongly related to the importance of “walkable streets”.
- There is not a large difference in preference between large cities and medium sized cities. This seems to say that the medium sized cities can be perceived to offer enough of an array of amenities to make them as interesting a place to live as large cities.
- All parts of a city can be cool ... in or near downtown, even the suburbs.
- Medium, and small, cities can effectively compete with large cities for the Creative Class. Small towns rate about the same as the downtown of a large city.
- Given that respondents are skewed toward large and medium cities, there is still a relatively large number who prefer small towns or rural areas.

### What the Creative Class Thinks

	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
I want to live in a place that fits my lifestyle more than a job that pays the most.	68.5%	15.5%	16.0%
I can get a job almost any place I chose to live.	70.7%	15.4%	13.9%
A good paying job is my highest priority.	48.0%	30.0%	22.0%

Percent answering 5,6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

- These questions seek to address the issue of the balance between the importance of a good job and the place respondents want to live.
- While job opportunities are an important component of choosing a place to live, quality of life is more important than many may have previously thought. It might be more important to some than jobs.

### **Top 10 “1st-Choice” Cities in Michigan**

1. Ann Arbor	18.5%
2. Detroit	9.9%
3. Grand Rapids	7.5%
4. Traverse City	5.1%
5. Marquette	4.6%
6. Birmingham	2.3%
7. Lansing	2.1%
8. Houghton/Hancock	2.0%
9. Royal Oak	2.0%
10. Kalamazoo	1.6%
11. All Others	44.3%

- Despite concerns that many sometimes express about Detroit as a place to live and work, Michigan residents still rate it as the 2nd best place to live in the state.
- Michigan residents see a difference between Detroit and its suburban communities. The suburbs can be “cool” too.
- Even smaller cities (e.g., Marquette, Houghton/Hancock) can make a list such as this.
- Grand Rapids, Marquette and Traverse City recently received honors as being among the “most livable cities” in the U.S.

### **Top 10 “1st-Choice” Cities in the U.S**

1. Chicago	8.4%
2. New York	7.2%
3. Detroit	3.8%
4. San Francisco	3.7%
5. Boston	2.7%
6. Ann Arbor	2.7%
7. San Diego	2.6%
8. Seattle	1.9%
9. Wash. DC	1.8%
10. Toronto	1.7%
• All Others	36.5%

- All these cities are ones that appear in the listings in the book “Rise of the Creative Class” as the best places to live ... EXCEPT DETROIT. This suggests that when exposed to the City of Detroit as a place to live, the perception of Detroit significantly improves.
- While it should be noted that these are mostly Michigan people that responded to the survey, it still is probably significant that on the national list, they rate Detroit as the 3rd most preferred place.

### Attributes Ranking of Preferred Places to Live

Attribute Ranking	%	Attribute Ranking	%
1. Safe Streets	93.0	16. Arts/Culture	68.5
2. Affordable	89.7	17. Near Friends/Family	66.1
3. Walkable Streets	86.9	18. Nightlife	62.6
4. Many Different Jobs	82.6	19. Low Traffic	61.3
5. Place for Family	79.3	20. Historic/Architectural	60.8
6. Shops/Service Businesses	79.2	21. Beach/Waterfront	60.5
7. Gathering Places	78.1	22. 4-Seasons	57.9
8. Public Schools	76.0	23. Music Scene	57.6
9. Sense of Community	75.3	24. Low Taxes	57.0
10. People My Age	75.3	25. Public Transportation	52.2
11. Scenic Beauty	74.9	26. Adventure Sports	46.9
12. Diversity	73.2	27. Malls/Shopping Centers	43.4
13. Trails & Parks	72.8	28. Pro Sports	36.3
14. Concern for Environment	69.7	29. My Own Business	35.1
15. Different Lifestyles	68.9	30. Warm Weather	27.9
		31. Gambling/Casinos	7.6

Percent answering 5,6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

- The “safe streets and neighborhoods” issue is the most highly rated attribute when choosing a place to live.
- It appears the issue of safety cuts across all areas. While safety is probably an inherently important issue in any decision about a place to live, focus groups and subsequent analysis in this report suggest that safety alone probably does not cause people to choose a particular city. It is factored into their decisions along with other lifestyle attributes.
- Public schools and a place for family are also highly rated, even for those who are not married or have no children.
- “Safety”, “Public Schools” and “Family” are important to those without children because:
  - Young people are looking forward to their future when they marry and raise children.
  - Even if one does not have a family, places that are good for families are good for anyone.
  - These types of places have positive impacts on home and property value.
- Many attributes perceived to be closely associated with Creative Class theory may not stand up well by themselves, particularly those that fall into the middle range of values (e.g., scenic beauty, trails and parks, beach/waterfront, historic). As a result the appeal of any one

characteristic would likely be significantly enhanced when offered in concert with other desirable attributes from the list. The strategy for using these attributes should be to group them together and present them as a package of attributes in order to offer an appealing image to the Creative Class.

- The survey found that gambling places/casinos, professional sports, large malls and shopping centers, while they can generate a significant economic activity and serve as viable tourist attractions, do not seem to play a significant role when choosing a place to live.
- Warm weather is not a critical issue in choosing a place to live. This allows Michigan, once and for all, to dispel the notion that it cannot compete with warm weather locations as a place to live. However, focus groups have suggested that there is a difference between those originally from a warm weather climate and those from a northern climate. It will probably be more difficult to sell a move from southern climates to Michigan if there are otherwise no ties to this state. The exceptions to this rule are those who may have family ties to Michigan or those who attended a Michigan college or university.

#### **Attribute Ranking by City Types - Top 10**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Downtown</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Suburbs</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Sm.Town/Rural</b>
1.	Walkable Streets	1.	Safe Streets	1.	Scenic Beauty
2.	Gathering Places	2.	Place for Family	2.	Safe Streets
3.	Many Jobs	3.	Affordable	3.	Affordable
4.	Diversity	4.	Public Schools	4.	Place for Family
5.	Different Lifestyles	5.	Walkable Streets	5.	Public Schools
6.	Shops/Businesses	6.	Many Jobs	6.	Sense of Comm.
7.	Arts/Culture	7.	Shops/Businesses	7.	Low Traffic
8.	Safe Streets	8.	Sense of Comm.	8.	Environ.Concern
9.	People My Age	9.	People My Age	9.	Friends& Family
10.	Affordable	10.	Gathering Places	10.	Walkable Streets

Ranking based on percent answering 5,6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

- One of the few ways in which the rank ordering of what was important in selecting a place to live varied significantly was by city-type preferred.
- Some key differences include:
  - Each of the 3 type of cities had a different choice for the most highly ranked attribute ... Walkability for Downtowns, Safety for Suburbs, and Scenic Beauty for Small Towns and Rural Areas.
  - Walkable Streets, Affordable Living and Safe Streets were the only 3 attributes on the top 10 list for all three types of cities.
  - Diversity and Different Lifestyles were among the top 10 for Downtowns, but did not appear on the top 10 list for Suburbs and Small Towns.

- A Place for Family and Public Schools appear on both lists for the Suburbs and Small Town, but neither appears on the Downtown list.
- The differences in these listings suggest which attributes a city might want to focus on as its highest priorities when seeking to attract the Creative Class, depending on the type of community it is. While there are a few similarities, each different type of city can be quite distinctive in what people look for in those varying settings.

### **The Factor Analysis and Development Targets**

In addition to the above types of statistical analysis another type of analysis, a factor analysis, was conducted. This allowed for a better understanding of the relationship among the many variables in the study and to derive further meaning. A factor analysis is a type of statistical analysis that defines relationships among variables. It is a multi-dimensional, correlation analysis that simultaneously measures many variables, as opposed to one or two dimensional analysis techniques such as simple frequencies or cross-tabs. It says if you rate one variable highly, respondents tended to rate certain other variables highly as well. These relationships among ratings created groupings of attributes

Such an analysis was conducted of the **31** attributes included in the Cool Cities survey. Seven grouping emerged where the attributes in that grouping had strong relationships to each other. These factor analysis groupings are among the strongest confirmation yet from the survey of the Michigan approach -- Cool Cities. It is also statistical proof that there is probably a strong, maybe causal, relationship among the variables identified in Creative Class theory as important to this audience, particularly the first grouping of Cool Cities Core Values.

These factors groupings have been labeled **Development Targets**. Each Development Target suggests an area of emphasis for a community. A strategic plan should try to address as many attributes as possible within each factor using the suggested Development Approach (as discussed later in this report.) A given community should assess its unique strengths, benefits and best potential from these lists using the Development Targets as the basis for priorities within its development plan.

### **Cool Cities Core Values**

Different lifestyles  
Diversity  
Art/culture  
Gathering places  
4-seasons  
Music scene  
Walkable streets  
Historic architectural character  
Many different jobs  
Service businesses

- The close relationship and top ranking of these attributes within the Cool Cities Core Values factor suggests that this is a useful definition of what constitutes a “Cool City”. As with other grouping, it suggests that simultaneously focusing efforts on as many of these factors as possible may be the best way for a community to spur economic growth.
- One strategy a community might try is to address the attributes on this list that are more directly under their control, (such as, enhancing arts, historic renovation, providing for public gathering places, or supporting a vibrant music scene) thereby having a positive impact on attributes that are more difficult to address directly, (such as diversity or different lifestyles.)
- All these attributes (except “A place with 4-Seasons”) are discussed as characteristics of top ranking cities for the Creative Class. The implementation of these characteristics can lead to a city that can be thought of as one of those places – A Cool City!

### **The Outdoor Factor**

Adventure sports  
Scenic beauty  
Trails & parks  
Beaches/waterfront  
Environmental concern

- The Outdoor Factor, as discussed in “Rise of the Creative Class”, is a grouping of individual, non-team, outdoor sports and the simple yet personal experience of being outdoors. It is a key characteristic in the selection of a place to live.
- The proximity of Michigan communities to substantial outdoor recreation assets (lakes, beaches, public forests, trail systems, etc.) means that

those communities have a significant advantage in appealing to the Creative Class.

- The strategy for taking advantage of this asset is simply a matter of marketing the existence of, and easy access to, these assets. Rarely do these assets need much investment to develop or improve.
- It also emphasizes the importance of urban areas in developing parks, trail system and areas with natural setting, even in large cities. These might be more traditional types of urban parks, such as a Central Park in New York or waterfront development such as the Lakeshore Drive area of Chicago or the planned linear waterfront park in Detroit.

<b>The 3rd Place Factor</b>
Professional sports
Gambling/casinos
Malls/shopping centers
Nightlife
People my age

- This grouping of factors is describing some of the key characteristics of gathering places for the Creative Class. This is sometimes described as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Factor. A 3<sup>rd</sup> place serves the function of a "social condenser". It is the place where a community or neighborhood meets to develop friendships, discuss issues, and interact with others. It is an important way in which a community develops and retains its cohesion and builds its sense of identity. Ray Oldenburg, in his book *The Great Good Place*, named these locations 3<sup>rd</sup> places with the two other important gathering places being home and work.
- If a community is to be successful in attracting the Creative Class it is important to offer gathering areas or 3<sup>rd</sup> places within the community. This concept of a 3<sup>rd</sup> place is why coffee shops have been typically associated with Cool Cities.
- A common misconception for many who have heard of the concept of Cool Cities is that the Creative Class can be characterized as a group of young people pre-occupied with nightlife that is associated with bars, night clubs and alcoholic consumption. While nightlife can be an important factor in the offerings of a "cool city", it is not one that is directly associated with the Cool Cities Core Values factor. Nor is it as important as the need to be with "People my Age", the highest rated attribute in this grouping. It suggests that this 3rd Place factor is more about opportunities to interact with people than it is about "partying".
- This is also an indication of why minor league baseball stadiums in Michigan have been successful concepts. It is because they are as much about the experience of gathering with friends and family in a fun environment as they are about the sport of baseball itself.

### **The Safety & Security Factor**

Public school  
Place for family  
Safe Streets  
Sense of community

- The Safety and Security factor contains four of the nine highest rated attributes, yet it is a different type of issue than the Cool Cities Core Values. While it is important to become a safe and secure place, it is best that it be jointly undertaken with other development targets, particularly Cool Cities Core Values. A place might not necessarily be “cool” simply because it is safe and secure. Yet, it cannot become “cool” if it is not perceived as safe to start with.
- Communities that address both Safety & Security, along with offering opportunities within the Cool Cities Core Values Factor list, can make significant progress toward becoming a “Cool City”.

### **The Economic Factor**

Affordable  
Low taxes  
Low traffic congestion  
Friends & family

- Affordability is the defining attribute related to this factor. It is the highest rated within this grouping of attributes.
- As with other factors, Economics alone is probably not a driving issue in decisions about places to live. Because affordability is a highly rated attribute, it might help attract new residents if combined with other important attributes from other groupings.
- Focus group findings suggest that the affordability issue is most strongly associated with housing costs.

### **Convenience Factor**

Public transportation  
Warm weather

- This grouping was the only factor with attributes that had an inverse relationship to each other.
- It says that if public transportation is important to the respondent, then warm weather is less important. Conversely, if warm weather is important then public transportation is a somewhat less important issue.
- It suggests that both issues are more a matter of convenience than anything else.
- It also might suggest that warm weather, since it is largely a matter of convenience, is not an aesthetic consideration. On the other hand, the “4-seasons climate” attribute is more likely to be an aesthetic, or quality of life, consideration because it appears with the Cool Cities Core Values Factor.

### **Entrepreneurial Factor**

My own business

- While the lowest rated factor, this might also be one of the most interesting factors. The overall low rating of “As a Place to Start My Own Business” probably says that this group of younger, mostly college students do not have a strong interest at this point in their lives in starting their own businesses.
- This also says that if starting a business is important, other attributes are not as important in choosing a place to live.
- One interpretation of this finding is that those who want to start their own business are largely driven by this need to the exclusion of other needs or interests. This relatively small, but economically influential group of people is motivated by other factors, and would probably warrant a separate type of strategy to try to attract.
- This is why Michigan is actively pursuing entrepreneurs through 3 new funds that will leverage federal and local dollars to make money available to those who wish to start or expand certain types of businesses in Michigan.

### **Additional Attributes**

- The study also gave respondents an opportunity to provide input on issues not specifically offered in the last of attributes in the study. While the vast majority of open-ended responses were simple reiterations of issues

already identified, a few were not on the list of attributes and are worth mentioning. They included:

- Community based activities
- Proximity to college and university campuses
- Good community services (fire, police, garbage, etc.)
- Cleanliness (streets, neighborhoods, etc.)
- Religious-related, faith-based (nearby church, religious communities, etc.)
- High-speed, broadband, internet connectivity issues – (Something Michigan is acting on. Governor Granholm announced plans in her state of the state address to bring high-speed internet service to the entire state by 2007.)

### **How to Apply These Findings**

- Cool cities may not be for everyone. Or, if a community does choose to use this economic development tool, not every aspect of it may be necessary to become a cool city.
- By following this simple strategic planning and analysis outline, a community can determine if cool cities is a viable economic development tool, what elements of it to pursue, and in what priority:
  1. Community Assessment - A community should first conduct an honest assessment of its strengths and weaknesses with respect to the types of Development Targets identified in this study. Determine which it may already have, which it may need, and which it may choose to pursue depending on local preferences and potential.
  2. Marketing Strategy - Many times communities already offer cool cities-types of assets. It is just that they are not widely known outside the community. Sometimes these issues are ones of an undeserved negative image that needs to be overcome. The challenge then becomes one of communicating the existence of positive assets. Examples of existing assets that might simply need marketing include proximity to nature-based recreation opportunities, affordable housing, or an architecturally significant downtown.
  3. Short-Term Development - Sometimes modest improvements can be accomplished in a short time frame yet prove to be tipping points for a community to become a significantly more attractive place to live. Façade improvements, sidewalk repair, signage to promote walkability, or empty lot clean-ups are a few examples.
  4. Long-Term Development - More long-term development is often needed as well. These types of strategies are the typical economic development strategies that are already in place in many communities. In some cases all that might be needed to

accommodate “cool cities” strategies is minor adjustments or re-prioritizing of objectives within that plan.

- Finally, The State of Michigan is not necessarily suggesting the Cool Cities Initiatives are the only or even the best economic development strategy for every community. It is simply an additional approach or strategy to use along with other, more traditional development tools. A community should however, be mindful of two issues.
  1. The findings of this study, and other academic work conducted by Richard Florida and many others, strongly suggest that the quality-of-life issue is probably significantly more important as an economic development tool that it has been previously given credit for.
  2. Because Cool Cities Initiatives deal with a variety of topics not typically dealt with in traditional economic development circles, it is important to include the parts of the community that are familiar with those non-traditional areas within the Development Targets when creating the strategic plan. Some of those representatives include the arts and culture community, minorities, small business owners, or the gay community.