



Speech by Rip Rapson:

## Constancy in an Environment of Change: The Continuing Case for Detroit

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It is a deep pleasure to be asked to participate in this profoundly important series. The “Building Hope” conversations about the mutual interdependence of the region and the city of Detroit are centrally relevant to the dynamics of positioning our region for the future. I applaud you for convening them.

It won't surprise you to hear that I have found this a very difficult time to talk with people outside of Michigan about the future of the city of Detroit. It used to be that all we had to deal with was searing media images of deterioration and abandonment, impressions of cronyistic and corrupt local government, and reports of failed public education, transportation and countless other public systems.

We could – and did – deal with all that. There are, after all, powerful counterveiling signs in all directions: young people bringing an energizing entrepreneurial creativity through the arts, small business development and urban homesteading; the private sector returning to downtown and investing in the quality of life in the urban core; our major health institution expanding. The national media were catching on, local optimism was infectious, real progress was being made.

But now, we face the specter of municipal insolvency, potentially giving rise to the appointment of an emergency manager to stabilize our legal and financial affairs. The certainties of hope are being clouded by the intensifying ambiguities of the present circumstance.

Tough stuff.

Indeed, one of the great philosophers of the 20th century – Woody Allen – remarked many years ago: “More than any other time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other, to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly.” There are those who would argue that this captures perfectly Detroit's current dilemma.

But I want to suggest that even though the financial crisis has wholly consumed the media – and the Bing Administration – the changes in the city's overarching trajectory may not be so dramatic as first appears.

In a word, I'll argue that the civic community of Detroit has been constructing aggressively and methodically over the last three years a remarkable scaffolding on which to erect a very different future for Detroit. I'll accordingly divide my remarks tonight into three broad sections:

1. A description of that scaffolding;
2. A discussion of the roles philanthropy is playing in Detroit; and
3. Some thoughts about the relationship of those efforts to the city's fiscal crisis.

# A Framework for Philanthropic Investment in Detroit

Three years ago, in the aftermath of Mayor Kilpatrick's troubles, I was part of three conversations that changed the way we at Kresge viewed our role in Detroit.

The first was in a trip I made to encourage the new president of the Ford Foundation, Luis Urbinas, to continue Ford's commitments to the city of Detroit:

A product of McKinsey consulting, he asked the disarmingly simple question of how much philanthropy is investing each year in Detroit. A back of the envelope calculation suggested that – considering Ford, Kellogg, Kresge and the local foundations – not even taking into account individual giving – was in the neighborhood of \$150 million/year.

Luis smiled and said, that means we'll invest \$1 billion in next six years. What do we want to buy with that? And what is the critical pathway to get us there?

Absolutely the right questions.

The second conversation was with my own board at The Kresge Foundation:

- National board, making \$160 million of grants and loans across the U.S.
- What is the case for investment here rather than somewhere easier: Newark or New Orleans?
- What would success look like? Over what period of time?

The third conversation was the kicker. I received a call from the White House – the Domestic Policy Council – indicating that President Obama hoped to visit Detroit and wanted to know what he could announce.

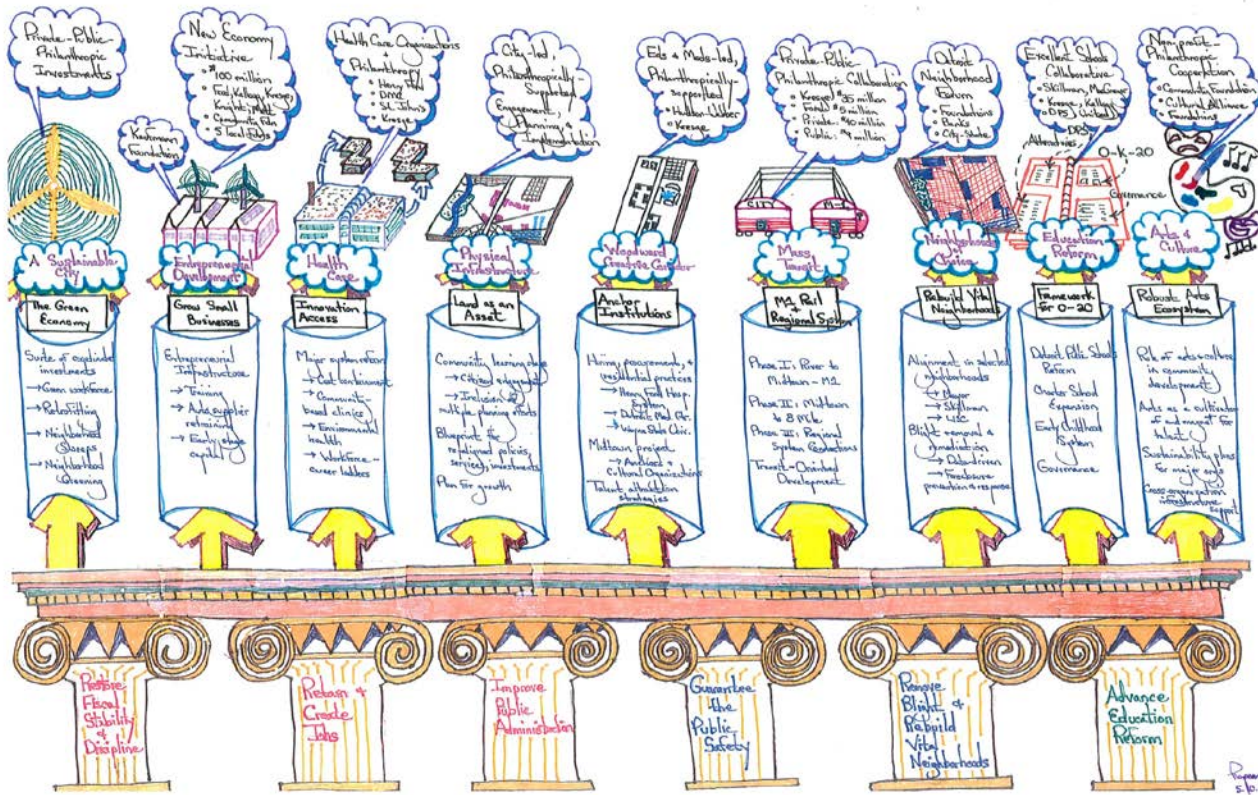
The White House was completely befuddled by Detroit – three or four elections in a matter of months – an unclear agenda, indecipherable sense of direction, and absence of a coherent story-line about our aspirations for the future.

The convergence of these conversations within a short period suggested powerfully the need for a coherent, comprehensible civic agenda, an agenda that conveyed discernible direction, clear intentionality and the real possibility of long-term investment opportunities. I believed strongly that all those elements actually could be identified in Detroit.

So, I sat in my office on a Saturday and tried to graphically depict the kind of activities going on in Detroit that suggested that kind of coherence. I arrived at nine clusters that shared four characteristics:

1. Each had to be based on on-the-ground, pre-existing community energy – people actually doing real, live work, not just thinking about it;
2. Each of these modules had to be backed up by people investing dollars at a substantial level;
3. Each had to hold the potential for meaningful impact, promising to move the city forward not only in the short-term, but also over the long-term; and
4. In their aggregate weight, the modules had to add up to a transformed Detroit – a City re-imagined in all its dimensions – its infrastructure, its human development systems, its economy, its cultural environment.

This is the drawing I came up with:



With apologies to your previous speaker, John Gallagher, we titled the effort “Re-Imagining Detroit 2020.” In our defense, however, we adopted that nomenclature before we ever saw John’s book – which I think is fabulous, by the way.

Please don’t try to read the teeny, tiny print. Way too frustrating. Let me instead walk you through the basic architecture of the drawing.

## 1. The Columns at the Base

- Mayor Bing’s articulated agenda
- Indispensable bedrock on which to build a broader civic agenda
- Have, in fact, invested heavily in his ability to realize progress: McKinsey, using \$4 million from the Lower Woodward Housing Fund
- Substitute in an emergency manager and you get the same set of priorities

## 2. The Nine Modules

- Let me stop only briefly on each – I’ll spend a bit more time with a couple of these in just a few minutes

### 1. Green Economy

- Initiative, led by Next Energy, to green the city’s administrative operations (lighting, vehicle fleets, buildings), to pursue neighborhood projects that both promote energy efficiency and foster new jobs (reuse and recycling of building materials, retrofitting, green products and services for the major employers) and to encourage small-scale neighborhood public spaces (neighborhood gardens, clean-up sweeps)

### 2. Entrepreneurial Development

- Four years ago or so, the Ford Foundation was facing pressure from Attorney General Mike Cox to demonstrate that the foundation was sufficiently committed to the place its fortune was created. Sought to create an enduring mechanism to help recalibrate through diversification the economy of Southeast Michigan. It would be called the New Economy Initiative.
- Ford put \$25 million on the table, provided that it would not be the highest contributor. So Kresge and Kellogg joined them at the \$25 million level. We were in turn joined by \$10 million from Miami’s

Knight Foundation and the remaining \$15 million from six local foundations to bring the total pool to \$100 million.

- This is the largest aggregation of philanthropic capital that has been pooled at one time in America. It is unprecedented.
- The consortium has focused on building small businesses by creating an “Innovation Cluster” in Midtown centered on the TechTown small business incubator – underwriting start-up high-tech businesses, creating programs for entrepreneurship training such as Bizdom U, pioneered by Dan Gilbert, and the Fast Track program run by the Kaufmann Foundation of Kansas City.

### **3. Health Care**

- The Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit Medical Center and St. Johns as drivers of improved community-based affordable primary care and the creation of job ladders in the health care field
- \$1 billion expansion plans from both DMC and HFHS

### **4. Re-Imagining the Form and Function of Detroit’s Land**

- Opportunity to see land as an asset, not a liability
- Think of it as a syncopation strategy, with both the weak beats and strong beats being essential to the whole. How do we reinforce the strongest of our assets while introducing greater vision and creativity into how we put disinvested areas back into productive use – urban farming, public preserves, reforestation, reclamation of creeks that have been buried in culverts

### **5. Woodward Avenue Creative District**

- Concentration of investments to elevate Midtown as a walkable, livable, magnet for people to live, work and visit
- Creation and exponential expansion of Midtown Inc., under the remarkable leadership of Sue Mosey, who has spearheaded development in Midtown for more than 20 years.
- We’ve brought to Detroit a Philadelphia firm that helped the University of Pennsylvania hire more local residents, buy more goods and services from local businesses, encourage faculty and staff to live in the neighborhood and invest in local residential and commercial activities. They have put in place the machinery to do the same with, the Henry Ford Hospital, the DMC and Wayne State – one result of this has been the LiveMidtown and LiveDowntown programs and an ambitious expansion of local purchasing programs.

### **6. Regional Transit**

- I must tell you that just a week ago, I was really dreading having to talk about this. Newspaper headlines were bleating about the death of light rail in Detroit. But now I am confident that we can again say that we will break ground on a light-rail system along Woodward from the River to Grand Boulevard sometime this year.
- But let me rewind the tape. It began with a lunch organized by Bob Larson, God rest his soul, to have me meet Roger Penske and Matt Cullin, then of GM. Roger’s next project after the Super Bowl and Clean Downtown
- A short while later, I was asked to attend a meeting of about 20 civic leaders, including Roger and Matt, convened by John Hertel, now head of the SMART bus system. John put on the table the idea of having the private sector build the first line of what would become a regional transit system – a light rail from the River to New Center.
- It pivoted on two commitments: Kresge would put \$35 million on the table and Roger Penske agreed to convince 13 partners to put \$3 million apiece into naming rights for the stops – confident that we could raise the \$100 million it would cost
- All sorts of bumps in the road – an alternative plan from the city. As Roger noted, it was like loading up a Christmas tree with too many ornaments and it finally tipped over when it turned out that the city was not able to bring to the table the financing it had committed to. That led to Gov. Snyder, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff and Mayor Bing announcing that light rail on Woodward would be replaced by buses, as part of a regional bus system.
- But meeting on Friday with Secretary LaHood

## **7. Stable and Vital Neighborhoods**

- Some mechanism to ride through the successful tsunamis that have rolled through Detroit neighborhoods – foreclosures, abandonment, population declines
- Detroit Neighborhood Forum – all banks, foundations, neighborhood community development intermediaries
- Attempts to coordinate the response of the philanthropic, nonprofit and banking sectors led to the work with the hospitals and Wayne State to invest in Midtown, to the creation of an office of Foreclosure Prevention, to Data Driven Detroit as a one-stop, highly competent place to assemble, analyze and distribute demographic, economic development, human development and other data essential for us to understand where we are and the challenges we face

## **8. Redesign of Education**

- The complexity of the current elementary and secondary educational environment is staggering following the governor's General Motors-like decision labeling the high performing schools the Detroit Public Schools, the lower-performing schools an Educational Recovery District and expanding the number of schools that can be chartered. Add to that two creations of philanthropy – the High School Accelerator (intended to accelerate the formation of high quality high schools) and Excellent Schools Detroit (a body that evaluates the performance of schools) – and you have so many moving parts that it's hard to know what education reform would look like, even if it were possible.
- Kresge has commissioned a Boston-based firm that has been instrumental in the redesign of the Washington, New Orleans and Boston schools to help sort this out and try to determine where the leverage points are.

## **9. Sustainable, Robust Arts Ecology**

- Sometimes tempting to think of the arts as a frill during times of economic duress. It is just the opposite. Artists help create community vitality, give outlets for expression of hope, are pioneers in moving into places others have left to die and create an environment of dynamism, entrepreneurialism and creativity that is an essential magnet for young people to come to Detroit and stay.
- Think of all the positive nonautomobile media attention Detroit has received over the last three years, and a very large slice of it is traceable to the arts and cultural community. The reports are about an emerging climate of energy and creative risk-taking, the possibilities of young people shaping the next generation of hip urban life in Detroit. Visual artists, musicians, writers, performance artists. It's what people talk to me about when I'm in New York or Miami.
- Philanthropy has been central to creating that buzz: through support for arts organizations; through individual artist fellowships; through the ArtX celebration; through the support of the major institutions' efforts to navigate through the recession. And in many other ways. It is a remarkable success story.

3. So those are the nine modules. Just a word about the clouds.

- You may not be able to see the clouds well enough to see inside – the clouds suggest where the energy – the dollars, the leadership, the ideas - will come from
- It is energy generated outside the gravitational pull of the public sector

This broad framework is based on a simple, but unprecedented premise: that philanthropy has to step into a civic leadership position, not just sit at the margins hoping that our good intentions and charitable impulses will help the community claw through tough times. Philanthropy saw clearly the opportunity to step up, read from the same page, aim clearly and get something done

But foundations stepping forward is not something that comes naturally, given philanthropy's strong predisposition that we lead best when we lead from behind – preserving our mantle of neutrality and avoiding stirring up a fuss.

As Adlai Stevenson once observed: "It's hard to lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse." We've had to work hard in Detroit to convince ourselves that philanthropy doesn't look so funny on a horse. I want to suggest that we've done that. The drawing has become a form of common vocabulary among foundations. It has crystallized a sense of urgency. It has provided a framework for various actors to build out workplans for each of the nine modules. And, it has cemented a close working relationship between philanthropy and the other sectors: public, private and nonprofit.

# Five Roles Philanthropy is Playing in Detroit

One might argue that all of this positive energy will dissipate in the surround of financial duress. But I want to propose exactly to the contrary – that the Re-Imagining Detroit framework has sunk its roots deeply, creating a new shape and staying power for Detroit’s long-term civic agenda. That brings me to the second part of my remarks: a discussion about the roles philanthropy has played, and can continue to play even in times of public sector instability and turbulence.

## 1. Contributing to resetting Detroit’s civic vision

The “vision thing” has become a tired cliché of philanthropy-speak. It is difficult to overstate, however, how debilitating the absence of shared community vision has been in Detroit. We know what we used to stand for and frequently reach back reflexively to that identity as a substitute for vision. But it is an entirely inadequate substitute. The world around us has changed in such fundamental ways – the reconfiguration of the auto manufacturers and their supply chain, the devastating cancer of the foreclosure and credit crises, the flight of capital from the center city and countless others – that Detroit has no choice but to reinvent itself and its place in the world. That hasn’t yet happened, a fact that crashes into daily life in the most tangible and harmful ways: immobilizing investors, making it nearly impossible for public officials to describe coherently their intentions to improve community life, sapping a sense of optimism from community residents.

“Re-Imagining Detroit 2020” is not a civic vision. But it is the indispensable framework for the creation of one. It describes real work on the ground. It compels the stitching of threads through the nine modules to recognize their interconnection and mutual interdependence. It opens an invitation to discuss what’s missing. It is, at the end of the day, a precondition to both describe and guide collective effort.

## 2. Aggregating capital

Philanthropy in Detroit is not turning its back on making grants to reinforce the social safety net, but it is simultaneously searching out ways to leverage its dollars and influence against challenges no single foundation alone could take on. One way is aggregating large pools of capital.

I’ve already mentioned the example of the New Economy Initiative, the \$100 million economic recalibration effort.

A second example is something called the Living Cities Integration Initiative. Living Cities is a 20-year-old consortium of the nation’s largest foundations, banks, lending institutions and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Kresge is a member. Living Cities last year chose five sites in which to combine and integrate loans and grants from its membership. We were able to convince Living Cities that the work we’re doing to revitalize Midtown should make Detroit one of those sites. The result will be \$25 million in grants and loans over the next two years to reinforce efforts to grow and strengthen small businesses, to fill the investment gaps in pivotal residential and commercial real estate projects and connect the hospitals and Wayne State more directly with neighborhood residents

## 3. Serving as a bridge to national resources

Because philanthropy in Detroit is a mixture of foundations with a local and a national focus, it has both a strong groundwire to the daily routines of community life and the capacity to attract to the city national dollars, talent and ideas.

There is no substitute for the profound and long-standing commitments to this community on the part of our local foundations: the Skillman Foundation’s work to improve outcomes for Detroit children, Hudson-Webber Foundation’s focus on attracting talent to the city, the MacGregor Fund’s investment in the human service organizations, the Fisher Family Foundation’s elevation of the importance of early childhood development, or the Community Foundation’s efforts to build endowments for key community nonprofits.

But national practitioners are equally critical. It is impossible to overstate, for example, the importance of the Ford Foundation’s dedication to Detroit of that foundation’s knowledge, dollars and national connections. I mentioned its critical role in forming the New Economy Initiative, but Ford has also systematically sought to map its national programming onto each of Re-Imagining Detroit’s nine modules. Similarly, the Kellogg Foundation has prioritized Detroit for investments in high school reform, fresh food access and early childhood development.



Philanthropy has also helped open avenues for national nonprofit membership organizations to bring their knowledge, networks and skill to Detroit. In the last couple of years, we have been able to attract large conferences of neighborhood-based organizers, foundations interested in regionalism, national research and policy institutions and others – with all the attendant energies and offers of help.

In addition to national foundations and nonprofits, philanthropy has also been essential to helping the Obama Administration find an on-ramp to Detroit:

- We've contributed to HUD's thinking about how it might provide technical assistance to Detroit's efforts to reprogram federal housing and urban development dollars.
- We've met frequently with representatives of HUD and the Domestic Policy Council to help shape the Smart Cities Smart Communities program, which has placed more than a dozen senior federal executives in Detroit to help the city more effectively use federal dollars.
- We've worked with the National Endowment for the Arts to make a set of joint investments in Midtown that demonstrate the power of the arts in shaping community development.
- We've danced at length with the Secretary of Transportation and his staff to ensure light rail – and the larger regional transit system in which it is nested – will be built.

#### **4. Strengthen the community's capacity to get things done**

The scope of Detroit's ambition to address its challenges and embrace its opportunities requires an unprecedented marshalling of resources not only from those with long-standing commitments to the city, but also from other actors who don't have that kind of history, but who do possess a genuine belief in the importance of infusing Detroit with the kind of ingenuity, skill and persistence that will be necessary if the city, together with the region, is to get where it wants to go.

Philanthropy has invested heavily in these efforts.

On one hand, we've invested in Detroiters working in Detroit. We've funded citizen-based planning efforts, provided neighborhoods with micro-grants to make community improvements, financed consultants to assess key municipal functions, supported scores of community-based nonprofits and countless others.

All of this is part of an intention to reconnect the work that thousands of Detroiters are doing decently and honorably inside government, the private sector, in nonprofit organizations – indeed, in all areas of community life – with a refreshed vision of how our city can advance.

On the other hand, we've also invested in external resources, attracting a new cohort of energetic and well-trained people galvanized by the possibility of daring innovation and enduring change. Among the investments that Kresge has made, often in concert with partners, include:

- Our bringing to Detroit the Philadelphia firm I mentioned earlier to design and roll out the “hire local, buy local, live local efforts” of Wayne State, the Henry Ford Hospital and the DMC.
- We've provided the funding to the planner Toni Griffin, Dan Pitera at the University of Detroit Mercy and the Boson-based Institute for a Competitive Inner City, as well as other gifted professionals from throughout the world, to help reshape the city approaches to land-use reform.
- We've engaged one of the nation's premier citizen engagement organizations to work in concert with Detroiters to develop a far-reaching, robust community engagement strategy to undergird efforts to reimagine the city's form and functions.

- We've supported the Brookings Institution in focusing a national auto communities summit on Detroit and to follow up with a series of white papers for Gov. Snyder detailing how the State of Michigan can recast its policies and investments to benefit Detroit and other distressed Michigan cities.
- We've invested in the German Marshall Fund to choreograph a series of visits by Detroit municipal leaders to European cities that have effectively remade themselves in light of new economic realities.

And, we launched last spring the Detroit Revitalization Fellows. Housed at Wayne State University, the program pays the salaries of, and provides executive development certification to, 29 mid-career professionals in the planning and community development field who have been placed in organizations playing a strategic part in the city's revitalization. One-third are city residents, one-third are former Detroiters who have moved away and one-third are new to the city. Thirty people will not change the trajectory of Detroit. But the program promises to catalyze an exciting new chemistry, creating a high-capacity network of emerging leaders that will thicken the membrane of civic capacity.

## 5. Suggest the outlines of a new civic alliance

Detroit presents a constellation of challenges so densely packed, intertwined and complex that the solutions must be systematic not atomistic, dynamic not rigid, nuanced not ideological, long-term not episodic, participatory not hierarchical. These are classically "adaptive problems," not technical problems. The answers are unknown. No single organization can address them. And the response will require a change in beliefs, priorities and behavior.

It can be argued that the only way to unlock these kinds of impenetrable social problems is to coalesce a group of independent actors from different sectors capable of marshalling shared resources around a common agenda.

That is a good description of what philanthropy is doing in Detroit. Not that we can substitute for a committed public sector, because we certainly can't. What philanthropy can do, however, is commit to a place over a long period of time, help identify an aspirational horizon line and assist in drawing together cross-disciplinary, cross-sector energies to engage and invest selectively in those activities that will drive progress toward that horizon.

The modules of the Re-Imagining Detroit Framework suggest the various forms that can take.

But it is in the fourth of those modules – Detroit's attempts to imagine new, more productive uses of its land – that the idea of concerted action across the sectors will be most challenging – and most beneficial.

As I'm sure John Gallagher told you, in those vast stretches of abandonment so familiar from the national media's photo essays, Detroit has more public open space than any American city – the equivalent of 40 square miles – or the size of San Francisco. Waves of plant closing have vacated hundreds of acres of land at a time, and less-than-hardy wood-frame structures have deteriorated like houses of cards, leaving the city with some 70,000 vacant homes or abandoned parcels. It is more space, far more space, than traditional planning and development constructs can handle. More space than a municipality can manage through its normal tendency to spread services in equal portions across the landmass.

In a word, Detroit's geography dwarfs its governance machinery. It simply has to repurpose its underutilized land in order to survive, stabilize and grow. That's a complex undertaking, riddled with layer upon layer of difficult choices.

There is the sheer intellectual difficulty: There are a lot of moving parts. There is the magnitude of the resources required – not just financial but also human. And there is the politics – because land use is to local government what Social Security is to the federal government: the third rail that makes quick work of those foolish enough to tempt it.

Philanthropy's first contribution has been to condition its financial support – particularly Kresge, Kellogg, and Ford – not on *what* the future form and function of Detroit's land must be, because we don't know that, but instead on the *way* the work is to be done.

I'm happy to take questions about this, but let me simply suggest that we have rebooted and moved to the University of Detroit Mercy, outside of city hall, responsibility for the land reimagination work. That work, in turn, braids together three elements:

- The first element is technical land-use analysis. A half-dozen teams of experts are completing a series of analyses of Detroit's water, soil conditions, transit patterns, infrastructure, utilities, commercial and industrial holdings, contamination patterns, residential demographics and countless other dimensions that bear on the carrying capacity of our land. These analyses will shape the creation of a number of alternative future scenarios that will be shared with community residents for their reactions, suggestions and refinements.



- That process of engaging citizens in digesting and reformulating potential scenarios is the second element of the work. We have already set in motion a far-reaching process to invite citizen input in all sorts of ways: from electronic town halls to door-to-door canvassing; from phone surveys to intimate workshops in libraries or beauty salons; from tens of thousands of provocative fliers to twitter campaigns. If we are really going to take seriously how our land can create new opportunities rather than sit on the municipal ledger as a liability, we'll need to capitalize on the perspectives and buy-in of Detroit residents who understand the city most intimately.
- The third element of the land-use reimagination process is finding short-term wins: activities that show neighborhood residents that progress is possible, even in small doses. We're working closely with Mayor Bing, who has identified three target neighborhoods, to make those kinds of investments over the next number of months.

## Conclusion: Surmounting Fiscal Duress

So that brings us full circle. How do these roles play out given the current state of fiscal duress? Let me offer a few concluding remarks about that.

From the outset of his term, Mayor Bing sought to set the city on the daunting path of stabilizing public finances, reasserting the importance of effective public administration, enhancing public safety and attacking blight and residential abandonment. It has proved to be even more complex, backbreaking and indeed intractable than the he could possibly have imagined.

This is not philanthropy's agenda to move. We've helped in one way or another, as I've described. But we have reached the fence posts of our competence and capacity. We can only hope that the mayor, the city council, the governor and any agents they enlist – willingly or otherwise – can make a serious dent in what is a mess of the highest order. And let us be clear – whether the route is an emergency manager or a consent agreement or something else – the collateral damage will be horrific, with thousands of people laid off, vital services cut back, bond obligations annulled and more.

But, at the risk of sounding like Nero watching his city burn, I would argue that philanthropy's role is to stay its course. Why? Because the nine pillars of activity are in full motion. Because by keeping our eyes on what we can accomplish by investing in environmental sustainability, entrepreneurialism, health care, new and creative uses of land, the retention and attraction of young people, public transit, early childhood development, the arts and the other pieces of the drawing, we stand the best chance to creating the indispensable bedrock qualities that give people a reason to live here, to invest here, to believe there is a compelling future here.

This is not small-bore work susceptible of a light touch and fleeting commitments. It is instead aimed at the heart of civic identity and patterns of daily life. It will have enduring ramifications for the lives of every citizen of the city – indeed, for every citizen of the region.

I must admit that it has been tempting while reading the media prognoses of Detroit's fiscal plight to conclude that there are no realistic options for a once-grand city, leveled as it has been, by forces both of its own making and out of its control. Amid the challenges, however, lie the opportunities for equally momentous potential transformation. Detroit is slowly putting in place the building blocks to recast the arc of its aspiration – a process with profound implications for other once-great industrial centers of mid-America.

Detroit needs to come at its challenges with an ambition unprecedented in America.

It will have to be smart – challenging our preconceptions about what a city is supposed to look like and how it works.

It will have to be bold – pursuing ideas that will strike some as outlandish and others as foolish.

It will have to be inclusive – eschewing the kind of resistant energy that hews to a predisposition to distrust outsiders and an unnecessary determination to go it alone in favor of a propelling, vitalizing energy that embraces and enlists all those with a passion for the future of the city.

And it will have to be unflinching in its courage – bracing against the political turbulence that inevitably arises in a town whose resistance to change is deeply encoded in its DNA.

We at Kresge believe it will be all those things. Under the circumstances, being anything other than an optimist strikes me as a profound waste of time.

So thank you for listening. I'll look forward to your comments and questions.