

TECHONOMY

TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

Why I Believe in Detroit

Speakers:

Tonya Allen, The Skillman Foundation
Brian Balasia, Digerati
Catherine Kelly, Michigan Citizen
Bruce Schwartz, Bedrock Real Estate Services

Moderator:

Rochelle Riley, Detroit Free Press

Riley: How are you doing? I don't know if you know this about Detroit, but if somebody asks how you're doing or they ask how your mama is, you have to be a little loud with it. How's everybody doing? I am thrilled to be joined by some wonderful people and some wonderful causes.

The Skillman Foundation is changing Detroit a neighborhood at a time through its schools, parents, and children. The architect of its 10-year, \$100 million Good Neighborhoods Program is its CEO and vice president Tonya Allen. She's a native Detroiter. Please welcome her.

As publisher of the "Michigan Citizen," Catherine Kelly is continuing a mission begun by her father, Charles D. Kelly. In 1978, he founded a newspaper to focus attention and tell the stories of the state's African-American and progressive communities. The "Citizens" goal is to engage decision-makers and to make a difference. Please welcome Catherine Kelly.

The best thing you need to know about Quicken Loans is that its headquartered in Detroit. Then in order, it's the fourth largest retail mortgage lender, has nearly 5,000 employees, is one of the top places to work in America, and has a partner in Bedrock Real Estate Services, which has its own Detroit Relocation Ambassador. That's devotion to the city and that's Relocation Ambassador Bruce Schwartz.

The Digerati are the elite of the computer and online worlds, derived from digital and literati. The class includes famous computer scientists, tech magazine writers, some bloggers, and Brian Balasia, who runs a company -- no, who leads a movement whose warriors believe that any problem can be solved. That is our motto in Detroit.

In Detroit, Digerati stands for the team that he leads that maps business operations for clients and studies current technologies, existing software, establish processes and available human resources to make things better. Please welcome Brian Balasia.

We're going to do two speed rounds and the audience can play. I'm going to ask the panelists to give me one word, single word, that describes Detroit now. Tonya?

Allen: Very easy: Resilient.

Riley: Okay. And Catherine?

Kelly: Divided.

Riley: Bruce?

Schwartz: Momentum.

Riley: And Brian?

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TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

Balasia: I'll say misunderstood.

Riley: Now, give me one word that describes Detroit in 10 years. Brian?

Balasia: Hopefully focused.

Riley: Focused, okay. Bruce?

Schwartz: Astonishment.

Riley: Catherine? I'll come back to you because I know Tonya has one.

Allen: Comeback.

Riley: Comeback. Interesting. Interesting.

Now, just out of the audience, whether you're a Detroiter or a Seattler or Dallasite, I want you to just yell out a word that you think describes Detroit right now.

[AUDIENCE RESPONSE]

I love that. I heard "real." I heard "exciting." I heard "respect." Now, give me 10 years.

[AUDIENCE RESPONSE]

I love that! Okay! I heard my favorite word. "Kick-ass." Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

When I decided to start with this exercise, I was trying to think of a single word for myself. And for Detroit now, I came up with astounding. And for Detroit in 10 years, I came up with astounding. I think what we miss sometimes is you can be at various stages of astounding and wonderful and kick-ass, and the only difference between where you are and where you're going is a Brian Balasia or a Bruce Schwartz or a Tonya Allen or a Catherine Kelly, or any of the people in this room who have decided they want to make something different in a decade.

Now what I want to do now is talk a little bit with some really important people, and I'm so glad you're getting to meet some of our best here in the city, about what is in our way and what it takes to move it.

I don't care who starts. What's our biggest obstacle that we need to just get out of the way?

Schwartz: I'll start. I think the perception, you know, you read the papers, you see the news, you get national coverage and it's not always the best about Detroit. Once people actually come down here and they see what the city has to offer and they look around and they can feel and touch it, it changes the perception all the way.

Riley: Tonya, what about you?

Allen: I think our biggest barrier is we allow other people to tell our story. We don't have a cohesive narrative about where we're going as a city. And when you don't have that, people don't know what's going on, they don't understand the synergy that's happening to restore Detroit.

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TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

Kelly: I think our biggest barrier is poverty. I think what we're seeing right now, we see -- or I see, I feel like, two Detroits. I see there's the downtown/midtown part of Detroit anchored by these great institutions, lots of resources, lots of energy. And things are looking hopeful for that, really hopeful for that part of Detroit.

But there's also the neighborhoods, which is a very different part of Detroit. Crime is increasing. Young people are having a really hard time getting an adequate education. People are going hungry. Think the poverty in Detroit and the reality that -- the daily grind that most Detroiters face is going to be, that's going to be the biggest barrier to the overall progress of the city.

Riley: I saw a look, Brian.

Balasia: That's my inquisitive and deep in thought. I think the biggest challenge we have is going to be reappropriating our resources. So the city of Detroit, even though we have thousands of people flooding back into downtown and midtown, we still have 700,000 some-odd residents stretched across a very large land mass. And figuring out how to take some of the resources that we have and reallocate them to be able to serve the needs of the broader community is going to be a challenge. And so how do you have enough police officers and enough police cars to cover that size of a land mass, even though you might not have the population to support it.

And until we figure out those infrastructure challenges, I think we're always going to be fighting this kind of duality of story, of great success and, you know, really deep poverty and high crime rates.

Riley: Take each others' problem and let's talk about solutions. So there's two Detroits. There's the Detroit that has and the Detroit that has not. Somebody who didn't mention that one, what's the solution?

Allen: I don't know, I think what the solution is or what the challenge is, in some ways, or what the opportunity is for Detroit to make itself known as different than any other place, is that when you think back 40 years ago, you about New York, Boston, San Francisco, you think about places that were really struggling. These cities, Seattle, was called the dead cities of that generation. And many would say that about Detroit today.

But when you think about all of the things that we have moving forward, that really is setting the economy where we can be the cornerstone of this nation's economy.

I think this notion of poverty, the question for me is, is how do we take this momentum and make sure that we are being inclusive in it so that children that are poor today don't have to be poor in 20 years. I think that is the place where we can actually make a mark as a city, not just for our own region, but I think for the entire country.

Riley: Somebody else take somebody else's problem and solve it.

Balasia: I think there are groups that are doing a great job of retelling the story and starting to reframe it, whether it's Quicken and Dan Gilbert's company is bringing new people into the fold and really starting to show off the gems of downtown. Or the foundations starting to reach out into the neighborhoods.

I think foundations have made a concerted effort to engage in the broader community but also to tell the brilliant stories that are occurring in the neighborhoods every day. And that work just has to continue and the story is changing. Detroit has a great deal of cachet around the country. And I don't know if Detroiters have recognized that yet.

Riley: Bruce, I know you're going to take the land mass, right?

Schwartz: Well, I would think, you know, now that Detroit is becoming a tech hub and really known for, you know, creating entrepreneurship and bringing more young people in, we need to help spread that into the neighborhoods, too. And teach the younger generation of what it means to be an entrepreneur and how to educate yourself in technology, because that's

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TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

obviously the future. We're here talking about it. And I think that would be a big help. So getting it into the schools in some way I think would be great.

Riley: What is the biggest surprise that you encounter when you talk to people from someplace else about our city?

Balasia: We work with a program called Venture For America. It's a program out of New York that's been recruiting students from top universities around the country. Instead of going into consulting or finance, to go into entrepreneurship. There's a number of VFA fellows in the audience today.

What was amazing, as we worked on that program and reached out to universities across the country, we recruited some of the best and brightest from these universities, Harvard and Penn, and the like. And overwhelmingly, the majority of the students picked Detroit as their number one place to go.

Riley: Whoo-hoo!

Balasia: It was incredible. And what we heard over and over again is that there is this great set of opportunities to get involved and to mean something and to build a company. This wasn't just for social innovation, but people were really excited about the entrepreneurial opportunities that they have in the city. And that's something I had never seen that broadly. I have heard it in little pockets, but to see students coming from around the country, all with that same message, was pretty impressive.

Riley: Catherine.

Kelly: One thing I love about Detroit, and I think sometimes people are a little bit surprised about this, is the level of sophistication. Detroit is a real city, you know.

I can remember growing up just, you know, you think of the cultural innovations that have come out of Detroit, from George Clinton, you know, you think of the local jazz station, I mean, the culture and arts scene in Detroit is huge and important and known worldwide. When I lived in New York or when you travel, when you say that you're from Detroit, there's just an instant level of respect that you get.

Riley: Do people just bust out with the Temptations, like when I was in Amsterdam, right on a street corner?

Bruce.

Schwartz: Well, I think there's, again, a few different thoughts. One of them is that perception thing again where people don't know and they only hear one side. But then there's a buzz and it's all around the country and it's out of the country. In fact, I was speaking to some people here at Techonomy that were saying, you know, when they said the event is going to be in Detroit, people were excited about it. They wanted to come to Detroit. They heard a lot of great things about it.

So, again, getting the people here and showing them is going to be, you know, one inch at a time, a way to help, you know, create, you know, a new perception.

Riley: Tonya, surprised?

Allen: It reminds me of a quote that the Berlin's mayor says about Berlin. It's that we're poor, but we're sexy. And that's what I think people are thinking about Detroit. That, you know, it's a moral imperative. People want to come because they believe we have grit.

Riley: I like that word as much as kick-ass. Grit.

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TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

We are becoming a technological and digital hub, which people probably would not have thought 10 years ago would happen. Where is that headed? How do you see that in the schools, in communications, in real estate, and in the universe?

Allen: Well, I would say we are seeing a lot of what you call blended learning platforms in education. Actually, our governor just established a recovery school district, which is very similar to an effort that has gone on in New Orleans. And this school district, which is called the Education Achievement Authority, their entire platform -- they are taking over 15 schools this fall -- their entire platform is technologically driven, where students are driving their own learning, teachers are using that technology to deliver curriculum in a different way.

And it pushes responsibility on students, parents, and teachers to be coinvestors in the education process. And we are seeing that. That's what's attractive and the new buzz in education reform across the country.

And I'm really pleased to say that I think that what we have in this platform in Detroit through the EAA, that we have, I think, one of the best in the country. And so if anybody wants to come see it, I'm happy to make sure you get a chance to tour or to look at that software because it's pretty fascinating.

Kelly: It's interesting that you bring this up. You know, this is kind of a local, but very frank, real conversation. You know, something I know I have been concerned about with the EA platform and this software-based approach to learning is, you know, you've taken literally the lowest-performing students. And they are in the school. And a large amount of their time is going to be spent with the computer. The software is driving the learning process. And I'm just a little concerned about that in the sense of, you know, are we taking the most disenfranchised, the most separate child who may need a little more attention or maybe another kind of learning environment and putting them in front of a computer. Is that the best?

You know, there's this tension sometimes with technology, also, in poor communities.

Allen: Well, what I would say to that, Catherine, is I think it's the whole notion of blended learning. It's not that technology drives it, but it organizes it. And so I think what we will -- you will see in this particular technology is that it's not about sitting kids in front of a computer and then they are going to get smarter. It's more so about, how do you use that technology to help you drive education? So it's not about kids sitting in front of computers the entire time. It's about pulling your assignments in, being able to customize the kind of education that you would want. It's about, in my opinion, when I think about education and you compare that to what I would say a medical environment, do you want your teacher to be the doctor or do you want them to be the office assistant?

And right now -- or the nurse? I want teachers to be doctors. I want them to diagnose, provide kids with the tools that they need. And technology allows that. Without that in a traditional classroom, what you're getting is basically translating that teacher into a nurse or an office assistant. They are doing things that they should not be focused on.

So that's how I think about blended technology and how it enables and creates innovation and education that we didn't have before.

Balasia: I think, going back to the original question, you know, the Metro Detroit region has -- I can't remember the exact stat. But there are more engineers in Metro Detroit than I believe in any other region in the country.

And at some point, when the auto economy was slipping a little bit, I think we realized that we could use that engineering prowess to be able to create diversity in our industries and the next generation of companies. And that's happening now and that's going to make our auto industry better and that's going to make the local economy better. And that power of having so many scientists and engineers in such a kind of tightly defined region is an incredible engine for innovation moving forward and something we should really capitalize on, and I think we're starting to see that happen.

Riley: It's about time.

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Bruce.

Schwartz: We have some of the best and brightest young students in the state of Michigan, all these great universities. Obviously, the Internet is catching on a little, so people want to get involved and create and bring more to the technology world. And a lot of the people coming through these great universities are focused on bringing great ideas.

Many of you may have listened to Josh Linkner earlier from Detroit Venture Partners. Our goal is to find some great people that have great ideas, help fund them and give them the resources they need to grow these ideas. And the next thing you know, we'll have, you know, the next Groupon or Facebook or Twitter coming right out of Detroit.

So again, it's catching on. People from around the country know that Detroit is becoming the hub for technology. And I see, you know, many more people flocking to the area for that exact reason.

Riley: The title of this panel is Why I Believe in Detroit. And I'm glad that the title is "I" and not "We," because sometimes we hide behind we and say what's expected by the Chamber of Commerce or by groups of people, instead of individually why it's important to you.

So tell me why you individually believe in Detroit. You guys could be anywhere. You guys have been places, but you chose to be here and to do what you're doing in Detroit. Why?

Schwartz: I'll start, I guess. I mean, it's got such a great, rich history. People from around the world know about Detroit. I'm sure it's gone through its hard times, but the infrastructure is here. The people are here. It's a great place to bring your family up.

Once we get more people on the streets and more stuff to do down here, you know, we're going to create a new Detroit, a Detroit that is, you know, a place where people want to come, a destination where people, you know, will come and we'll be proud of to show off.

So, you know, I'm just proud to be able to represent the city and show people what's going on and share with everybody who doesn't know all the opportunities that are here.

Riley: Catherine.

Kelly: I think Detroit is a great place for entrepreneurs. I think you can't help but look around and if you are a certain type of person, think about opportunities. I think the recovery from the auto industry and this economic decline Detroit has been in for so long has really pushed people to this edge where they are thinking of new ways of doing things, New Solutions, the Urban Garden Movement. I think about Alicka Keeny (phonetic). And I think recognizing that kind of opportunity is what really keeps me focused and what makes me believe in Detroit.

Riley: What about you, Tonya?

Allen: I hearken back to the first question, what do I think, what's the one word. I believe in Detroit because we're resilient. And I say that because, one, I grew up in this city. And actually, I always say this. I just turned 40 and people always talk about the good times in Detroit. And I have never known them. But what I have known is that as a city, we have always been striving, no matter how many setbacks we have had, to get back to those good times.

And I think about the work that we do in six neighborhoods, where there are lots of children and lots of people who live in those neighborhoods, despite the fall of the economy, despite the hard times, despite the poverty, they never get -- every single day, they get up and they try and make this place a better place. And they inspire me, and I believe in them.

Riley: Brian.

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TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

Balasia: I think this place is great. I don't know any other place in America where you're going to find kind of the blue-collar, hardworking, roll-up-your-sleeves mentality mixed with the brilliant minds from the research universities that we have.

There's very few barriers of entry. Costs are low. And it's not -- it's a small enough pond where you get to, you know, interact with everybody, but it's a globally connected marketplace. I think it is kind of this unique combination of all those things that makes it great for entrepreneurs and makes it why I love being here.

It's not pretentious. And yet it's not some small-town, you know, kind of pokey place where you just kind of sit around.

This is a hard-working, intelligent place that has global impact. And it's easy to navigate.

Riley: Go ahead. Do it.

Balasia: Yeah.

Schwartz: One more thing. The citizens of Detroit, they believe in the city. They are not victims of what's happened. They are not complaining about it. They are always promoting Detroit is a good place. I have been around other cities where they are blaming whatever for their issues. And I think we all believe in this city, whether in good or bad times.

Riley: Well, I have to tell you a quick story, because I moved here, oh, my gosh, 12 years ago from Louisville, Kentucky, from a town to a city. And for the first five years, I couldn't get any of my friends to come and visit. And they kept asking: What are you still doing in Detroit? Because I was supposed to be here for two years on my way to L.A. to make movies.

And I have been here 12 years for a reason. It's because you cannot not believe in this city. Why do I believe in Detroit? Why the hell not? I mean literally.

You're right about the people. Some of the most amazing and most interesting and most intellectually stimulating people I have ever met in any city live right here and are doing great things. And I think it's not Detroit. It's the Detroiters. And all of the Detroiters are not within the boundaries of 8 mile and Outer Drive and whatever the boundary is with Dearborn. It's everybody who believes in this city.

So yeah, why not? So I'm thrilled that you would say that. And, you know, it's time for us to now have a little bit more conversation with the people in the room who believe this place is exciting and interesting and kick-ass. Because we have got such a great panel, I want you to be able to talk to them about the things that they do and the things that are going on here.

I think the mics are set up on both sides. So if you do have a question, we'd like you to come to the mic so everyone can hear you. And while you're coming forward, I'll ask one more question.

If there was one thing, just one thing that you would add to the City of Detroit, right now, what would it be? And you only get one.

Allen: I was hoping I would be last. I think a cadre of change agents.

Riley: You're determined to get a punch in there no matter what, but that's okay. We'll go with your cadre, a cadre of change agents who would do what?

Allen: I feel like we as a city have lots of things in place. We've got a lot of things that are reinventing, refreshing who we are. And we've got a lot of bodies on that work. But quite honestly, I'm sure you all can see some of us are tired. We can't be on 20 things. We just need a few extra bodies that help drive that innovation and take advantage of the economic opportunity that exists in this city.

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Riley: Catherine.

Kelly: Public transportation.

Riley: There you go. If you hadn't said it, I would. Thank you. Thank you.

Schwartz: I would say if I could snap my fingers right now, I'd like to see a lot more residential apartments, lofts, condos, because the people want to live here.

Right now, if you want to get into the downtown/midtown area, pretty much going on a waiting list. So there's definitely a need for it. And when the people are here, the retail comes. And it works hand in hand. So the more places to live, the more people are coming, more stores will open. And, you know, the city will just continue to come back.

Riley: Now, tell the truth. 10 years ago, if somebody had said there was a waiting list to live in downtown Detroit, would you have asked what they were drinking?

Schwartz: You'd never believe it.

Riley: And, Brian, then we'll get to our questions.

Allen: Can I add quick, there are lots of places in the neighborhoods.

Riley: There you go.

Balasia: Along with that, I agree with both of them. That I think there should be mass transit so people can more comfortably live in the neighborhoods. I feel that's important that people could live in the neighborhoods and get rid of their car and still feel they like they are in the downtown. That's what's needed.

Riley: We have a question right there. Thank you.

Aronoff: Hi, Jeff Aronoff, executive director of D:hive. You guys all look great, by the way. I haven't heard this much in your comments, but you do hear it a lot in Detroit, this sort of ethos of boot-strapping and low barriers to entry and that Tonya mentioned the grittiness.

And those are all beautiful things, but do you ever worry that if Rochelle is trying to set up this sort of 10-year view that maybe we're setting ourselves up for relying too much on these low barriers to entry, being able to operate in this unoccupied space? At some point, we need to normalize, right, our city's economy needs to normalize. Do you feel like Detroit is prepared for that?

Riley: Catherine?

Kelly: Well, I mean, you said something that I just kind of want to break apart a little bit. I think low barriers to entry probably apply to maybe -- I'm not sure what your space or your sector is. But probably more of a technology space, I would certainly agree.

But I think for maybe more local businesses, mom-and-pops, people who just want to open a cafe or just -- my sister opened Le Petite Zinc. And the barriers to entry were tremendous, to just get a local cafe opened in terms of working with city government, the permitting process was just really, really difficult. So when we talk about being entrepreneurial, how are you an entrepreneur? What kind are you?

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TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

So for certain people, certain people have a really hard time doing business in the city. That's one of the things I have really appreciated about today, so many of the speakers talking about how technology offers the opportunity for people to go around systems. But I just kind of wanted to make that little distinction.

Aronoff: And just to clarify, I would argue that's not -- that the problems in navigating the city, that's not really like an economic barrier to entry. That's just sort of system functionality, you know, city government and policy issues.

Kelly: Also I think capital. If you are starting a business in Detroit, it's hard, you know. People don't really want to loan you money. You know, it's really difficult.

Balasia: I think the systems will adjust over time. I don't think we're talking about taking everybody and their ideas right now and plopping them down 10 years from now. I think people like yourself and D:hive and TechTown, all of the neighborhood associations will all adjust as the neighborhoods grow and as a more normalized market emerges.

Riley: Thank you. Is there someone next? Oh, I'm sorry. Hello.

Jebron: Hi, my name is Jebron from Oakland University.

[APPLAUSE]

Riley: I applaud all students, not just Oakland University.

Jebron: Thank you.

Riley: You're welcome.

Jebron: So my question is today during all of the meetings and all the conferences I've been hearing, the who, what, where, when, and whys of the revitalization of Detroit. I guess what I haven't been hearing is the hows. So I guess my question is, is that how do you start at the grassroots level and have grassroots participation in the revitalization of Detroit? How do you get that level to want to change Detroit?

Riley: Well, as one of the two journalists on the panel, I'll take a question and then turn to the panel. One of the most important things in the history of the city for the past 95 years happened last year. And the residents and voting residents of Detroit decided to change the way they elect the city council to electing them by districts, seven districts, instead of all at large, none totally and fully responsible for a particular area of the city.

It is possible, if it's done right and if people take advantage of this opportunity, to change the way people view the area around which they live, so that they see that parcel of property and that area of town is something they are responsible for, that they help make better, that they help keep clean, that they help fight and lobby to bring things to. If that happens, then all of a sudden you've got these stronger neighborhoods that we were talking about. Then you get some mass transit so people can get to them, it can help a lot.

Allen: I actually would challenge your assumption that the grassroots aren't engaged in the turnaround of the city. So midtown and downtown doesn't exist if the people in these neighborhoods haven't lived here and fought to keep this city alive. They could have left just like everybody else.

And I know tons of people in this community that wake up and try and do the best that they can do, which might be something as simple as I'm going to open up my house and let kids who don't have families serving them come in and eat a meal and make sure that they are safe. I'm going to make sure I feed them and clothe them and put them in school, to people who are organizing block clubs, people who are creating businesses in neighborhoods. So I think it's a misnomer to suggest that the grassroots isn't engaged.

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I think what would help is if we had a city infrastructure that actually would support them so they wouldn't be doing it on their own and feel despondent, that what they are doing won't matter.

So I guess what I would say is, how do we support that? And how do we create an inclusive conversation that would include these people who are doing things for the city in the rebirth? Where they have a stake in ownership in the city, which I just don't feel like we're having that conversation.

And I think if we're going to restore, if we're going to come back, if we're going to make ourselves distinct from other places, it's about how we create an inclusive society and specifically how we create an inclusive economy.

Thank you. Let's take another question. Yes, sir.

Williams: Hi, my name is Eric Williams. I'm an assistant law professor here at Wayne, and I run our small business legal clinic and our patent clinic, so we help small businesses, you know, form and we help them do patent applications. All our services are free. Publicity. And we also go and make presentations out in the community.

One of the things that I've noticed as we're out there talking to, you know, aspiring entrepreneurs in the community is something that has kind of gone unmentioned today. And that is the division between the city of Detroit and the immediate suburbs.

And so I have noticed a difference in -- with my clients, I have noticed a difference in the level of sophistication, familiarity with the process between those operating in Detroit, particularly in the neighborhoods -- and I grew up West Side. I'm a native Detroiter myself -- and those that are coming from not just the immediate suburbs, but further out.

And I have to say this. It's not -- there isn't the tension that was here. I've been in New York for the last 15 years. I moved back last year. There's not the same tension there was 10, 15 years ago. And the people that are, you know, coming from the suburbs, I see an investment and love for the city I never thought I would see. I'm like God bless them. I never thought I would see that.

But what I'm wondering is, as the city develops, right, as entrepreneurship becomes a more important part of the economy here, do you see it exacerbating sort of the suburban city tensions? Or do you see it as something that has the potential to clear away something that's been in place far too long anyway?

Riley: Thank you, thank you. Bruce?

Schwartz: I think that we have seen a change already where the people in the suburbs are recognizing the city's making some changes. And they want to be more involved in it. At Quicken and Bedrock, we have had many, many people coming from not only the suburbs, but all over the state and the country. But they want to be part of the revitalization. They want to lend a hand or say what can I do to be involved.

So we're just at the beginning of this. And with the momentum that we have and the interest from people from the suburbs and around the state, I think we're already seeing that change, you know, becoming reality.

Riley: We're going to go to this side. Yes, sir. If you ask your questions quickly, we can take two. If not, we have time for one more.

McCoy: Good afternoon. I'm Antoine McCoy. I am a local university student studying sociology.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

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TECHONOMY DETROIT • SEPTEMBER 12, 2012 • DETROIT, MI

The question I have is earlier today, I have heard that a lot of students within the state are leaving the state when they graduate, kind of like a brain drain, as I have discussed in sociology before. How do you market the job opportunities that we have here? You guys mentioned that Detroit is a technology hub, a newly technology hub.

How do we incentivize students to stay here? Especially within the public sector that we need their education and we need their skills to help revitalize the city.

Riley: Thank you. Brian?

Balasia: One of the projects we've been working on for the last six years is called Intern in Michigan. We saw that more than 50 percent of the college graduates were leaving the state of Michigan right after graduation and telling us that the vast majority of them were leaving because they didn't believe there were jobs available for them, not because they didn't love the community.

At the same time, the number one complaint from employers in the state of Michigan is that they are struggling to recruit college-educated talent. So we have a broken market. Students want to stay. They can't find jobs. Companies want to hire students. They can't find students.

So we realized that internships are the best way to do that. We created Intern in Michigan, that the foundation has funded, to help connect students with internships.

Because we found that if a student interns in a region, 83 percent of the time they stay there. And 70 percent of the time when they get an internship, they get a full-time offer from the company they intern with, which is an amazing stat when you consider that most students aren't seniors when they intern. That's one of the ways.

I know Quicken and a whole host of other companies have been really pushing and making public the job opportunities that are available.

Allen: If I could just say one thing as well. In terms of young people between the ages of kind of 15 and 18, we have a movement going on here, around grown Detroit's talent, young people who are here, making sure they have access. We need these technology start-up companies, all of these new industries, to make available access for young people to get jobs during the summer and understand the industries as well, even before they go to college. And just a plug for that. It's \$1,500 a kid a summer. So let me know if you want to support that.

Riley: That's pretty awesome.

Schwartz: Just to piggyback on that, because last summer -- two summers ago we dipped our toe into the intern program. We hired 250 interns, and we programmed the summer, not only did they have a great job, but plenty of stuff to do.

This past summer, we had over 600 interns, sprinkled through many different companies. And when they left, we got tons of testimonials about: My mind has changed, I love what's going on in Detroit. And again, it goes back to once you see what's going on, you become a believer.

Riley: I want to thank you so much for that question. Stay in touch with me. If you can't find a job, you let me know. And I do mean that. Because I'm going to tell a quick story, because we're out of time for questions. I'm so sorry, ladies and gentlemen.

About five years ago, a young man that had been on a high school roundtable that I hosted at the "Detroit Free Press" told me that he was going to Harvard. He was a student at Renaissance. He was an awesome kid, lived on the East Side in a bad neighborhood. He said: I'm not going to die. I'm going to not just survive, I'm going to thrive and go to Harvard.

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I was doing a program at Harvard on C-Span, when the cameras turned off, this young man walked up to me and said: Hi, Ms. Riley. I told you I'd get here. I made it. And his name was Brian Hargrove. And four years later, he called me up. He said: I left Harvard. I had opportunities in New York and Atlanta, but I wanted to come back here. But I can't find a job. So I wrote about Brian. He got 16 job offers. He's doing awesome.

There are jobs. It's just a matter of connecting great, raw, beautiful talent with people who are looking. We need to make sure the lookers are looking harder. We need to make sure that the young people know how to find connectors. And everybody needs to stay in touch with each other, which is why I love this Digital Age. I'd like to thank our panel. You guys are awesome.

Brian Balasia, Bruce Schwartz, Catherine Kelly, Tonya Allen. And I'm Rochelle Riley. Thank you so much for being here for this awesome panel. Tell them we want to do this again! Thank you so much.

We're going to be down front, so please come and talk to us. Thank you.