

## **ATTACHMENT B: Young Professionals Focus Group Results June 30, 2008**

Background: As part of the Success Process research phase, a focus group was held to identify what are important factors in retaining and attracting young professionals to our region. While we have a good idea of the physical and social success factors required through the many articles we have read, we thought it was important to gather local young professional opinions. Fourteen young professionals (representatives of existing YP networks and recommended attendees through interviews with success leaders) attended a focus group meeting. The focus group was conducted by Kathy MacDonald with the assistance of Michael Nisson and Tony VanDerworp.

### **Attendees:**

Jason Costello  
Anya Dale  
Andrea Bernardini  
Linda Brown  
Ken Thomson  
Jen Langenberg  
Megan Sheridan  
Rebecca Lopez-Kriss  
John Paul Narkowski  
Kathryn Knapp  
Newcombe Clark  
Diana Bowen  
Bennett Borsuk  
Michael Nisson

### **Focus Group Questions and Results:**

#### **What factors most affect your happiness?**

##### Job related comments:

- Financial stability... sufficient to ensure the lifestyle I desire
- Having meaningful work
- Debt reduction
- Rewarding work

##### Lifestyle related comments:

- Good music – a variety of different types
- Choices for what to do ... those that require both high and low energy
- Friends and a social network ... friends to be with 3 or 4 nights or days or week
- A variety of things to do and events
- A “place” to live that feels cool to me

- Weather ... Ann Arbor's weather gives you an appreciation for the days a year you can enjoy
- Sunshine
- Good food ... a variety of types and places
- Recreational groups
- Giving back ... opportunities
- Beers and place to drink it
- Cocktails and places to have them
- Cocktails in a place without television
- Shopping
- Access to nature
- A sense of how you spend your time ... a sense that you are building something or doing something meaningful
- A sense that I am a productive part of society
- Exercise
- Time spent outdoors

Transportation related comments:

- Parking
- Travel
- The choice to have a day without a car

**On a 1 to 10 scale, how many of these factors are present in Ann Arbor now? (10 is high; 1 is low)**

- Range of responses from 4.5 to 8.5
- Average for the group was 7

**Friends are leaving the area because ...**

- Big city appeal
- Weather ... NOTE: This may not be that significant since the weather in New York or Chicago is not that great
- A job elsewhere.
- Density of young people is too low
- Going to grad school elsewhere
- Lack of convenience (the car factor and the desire to walk places)
- Ann Arbor feels stale after a while
- Affordability factor
- Lack of big group venues with music or concerts
- Variety
- Concerns about development, growth, and career

**What factors compel you to stay in the area?**

- Paying off debt
- Love my job (if I had my friends here I would stay)

- Family (NOTE: for some having family in the area was a real plus ... for others, it was a negative) Desire to have family close, but not too close
- Too inconvenient to move
- Access to people of influence
- How easy it is to network
- Grad school community
- I am “established”
- The university connection ... being in a university town
- Cost of living here versus in a big city
- Dog-friendly town
- Loyalty to the community ... feeling I am paying the community back for being good to me
- Diversity of the community

**How could Ann Arbor do better? Ann Arbor could do what things better?**

Job related comments:

- Incentives to us
- More “middle” jobs
- More internships
- More interaction with professional community

Transportation and housing related comments:

- Direct transportation to other areas such as Detroit, the airport or Toledo
- Downtown affordability and walkable housing; a variety of housing
- Having a young professional area or neighborhood

Lifestyle related comments:

- “Go to” or “be with” groups
- Broader issue groups ... meet more people through these
- Increase diversity (race/ socioeconomic/GLBT/age) in the area

Other comments:

- Bi-partisan government at the local level (NOTE: Local government seen as ineffective)

**What things should the community STOP doing?**

- Refusing to plow snow on Sundays and holidays
- Stupid spending on things such as signage
- Parking tickets
- Parking meters should be for longer periods such as 3 hours
- Lots of talk but not action within local government
- Thinking we (the city of Ann Arbor) will always be OK
- Thinking as individual communities