



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY excerpt from *Re-Envisioning Our Future Together: Building Davison 48423*

An Initiative Convened by The Engineering Society of Detroit Institute, Prima Civitas Foundation, Michigan State University, and Land Policy Institute & Extension

Often a picture can be a useful tool in describing the breath and width of an interactive undertaking such as a symposium.<sup>1</sup> Below is a diagram that we believe captures key outcomes from the work of our symposium.

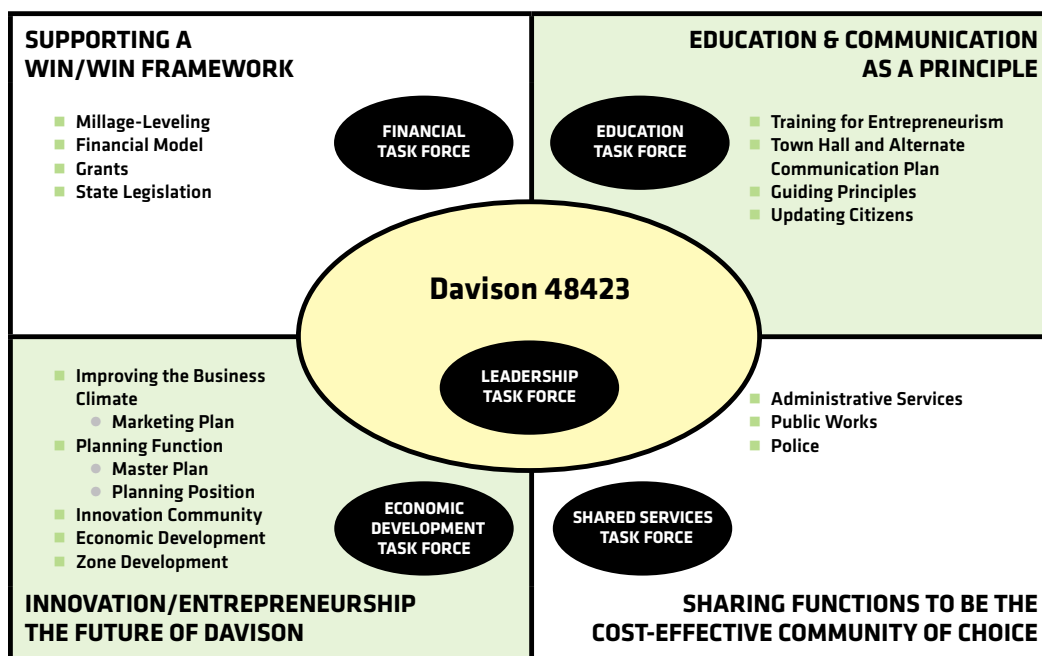
If one message came through loud and clear after the conclusion of our symposium, it was simply and starkly the need and importance of the process, once begun, to continue to go forward in the face of the realities of global competition, demographic decline, drain of investment and critical need for tax base stability within communities. As conveners, we have set forth in this Executive Summary the symposium’s five key findings that should be pursued.

## GOALS OF THE DAVISON SYMPOSIUM: RE-ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER—Conveners’ Recommendations

### Recommendation #1—Form “48423 Davison as a Destination” Leadership Task Force

To promote the City of Davison and Davison Township as a community of the future, the conveners of the symposium recommend that a leadership task force be formed to address pending issues and develop a strategic direction for “48423”—a combined Davison community. The task force would provide the leadership for four primary efforts, including evaluating initiatives to result in a win-win scenario for both the City of Davison and Davison Township. The four primary areas of efforts are

<sup>1</sup> Few people have ESD Co-Director David A. Skiven’s talent for turning thoughts and words into pictures. The diagram that follows was drawn out freehand by Mr. Skiven during our symposium and finalized for this report.



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described in detail in the conveners' recommendations and are as follows:

1. Supporting a win-win financial framework
2. Innovation and entrepreneurship are the future of the Davison Community
3. Sharing functions to become the cost-effective community of choice
4. Education and communication as principles of the Davison Community

In each area of effort, it will be essential that representatives be identified who will be dedicated to the initiatives and willing to lead during uncertain and difficult times.

### **Recommendation #2—Supporting a win-win financial framework**

The symposium identified a critical obstacle to a successful win-win scenario for the City of Davison and Davison Township: the difference in millage between the two communities. The conveners recommend that a professional task force be formed from representatives of both communities and state and support organizations to evaluate, develop and recommend a course of action for at least the following items:

- Identify a time-based plan to level millage between the city and township
- Identify and develop state legislation required to implement recommendations
- Develop a financial model that communicates the direction
- Identify and pursue federal, state and nonprofit grants that could be used to enable necessary changes
- Identify and pursue federal and state tax credits that could be applied to the identified effort areas

### **Recommendation #3—Innovation and entrepreneurship are the future of the Davison Community**

The conveners recommend that a task force of representatives of the City of Davison and Davison Township be formed to improve the business climate within the community and to devise a marketing plan focused on innovation and entrepreneurship—more popularly known as the “new economy.” It will be critical for the communities to develop a combined planning function staffed with professionals who will create a business-growth master plan. Additionally, the

task force will work in conjunction with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to identify opportunities for state support and potential economic zone development. The overriding priority of the task force should be the creation of the innovation community for Michigan.

### **Recommendation #4—Sharing functions to be the cost-effective community of choice**

The financial stress that the State of Michigan and all communities within the state are facing makes it apparent that a strategic direction based on the foundation of the past is a blueprint for failure. The conveners concluded that a critical element in developing the plan for the future of the City of Davison and Davison Township is to combine duplicate services to improve overall effectiveness and cost efficiency. To address this opportunity, the conveners recommend the formation of a joint task force that would evaluate and recommend opportunities for sharing services in the following areas:

- Administrative services
- Police
- Public Works

Representatives of the task force should include individuals qualified in the function or service and be positioned within the community to speak knowledgeably regarding the function.

### **Recommendation #5—Education and communication as principles of the Davison Community**

Davison and Davison Township have a long and successful history as a joint community working to develop a state-of-the-art education program. This collaboration resulted in the community having the third-highest-ranked educational system in the state. The conveners believe the community of Davison is in the unique position to build off this success and become a state leader in two critical areas—continuing education and communication. It is recommended that a task force be formed to develop and implement a plan that would at least:

- Develop and implement training and education programs in the areas of innovation and entrepreneurship for residents
- Develop an aggressive communication plan to keep the residents of the community informed of the efforts of all the task forces