

# Agenda

## Downtown Economic Growth Authority

### Board of Directors



City of Kalamazoo

Monday, September 15, 2025

3:00 PM

Main Conference Room at Community Planning and Economic Development

#### A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

##### 1. Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this Downtown Development Authority is to halt property value deterioration and promote economic growth within its business district, to increase property value.

*The purpose of this Downtown Economic Growth Authority is to correct and prevent deterioration in residential, commercial, and industrial areas, to authorize the acquisition and disposal of interests in real and personal property; to authorize the creation and implementation of development plans and development areas.*

The Kalamazoo DDA and DEGA, acting in concert, have set forth the strategic objective of focusing its resources on improving “The First 16 Feet”, a three-dimensional volume of space including buildings ground floor façade, the frontage that exists between the façade and the common space, and the common space that provides access to and through the district.

#### B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of the Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board on August 18, 2025. (**Action: Motion to approve**)

#### D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report - July 2025 (**Action: Motion to accept the July 2025 Downtown Economic Growth Authority financial statement**)
2. Downtown Report - September 2025

3. Downtown Economic Vitality Study Presentation (Meghan Behymer)

**E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

1. 2026 DEGA Budget
2. Ambassador Program - Q4 2025 Recommendation (**Action: Motion to approve the allocation of the \$39,064 budget variance to expand Ambassador Program services during October–December 2025 under the new Block by Block contract.**)
3. Michigan Talent Partnership Program - Letter of Support (**Action: Motion to authorize the Board Chair to submit a letter of support on behalf of the Downtown Economic Growth Authority for the City of Kalamazoo’s grant application to the Michigan Talent Partnership Program**)

**F. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

## **Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes**

August 18, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

**PRESENT:** Curt Aardema, Mayor Anderson, Jeff Breneman, Trisha Kidd, Rick Searing, Jessica Thompson

**EXCUSED:** Clarence Lloyd, Stanley Steppes

**ABSENT:** Kwame Gyimah

**STAFF:** Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator), Erin Hahn (Community Investment Administrative Assistant); Jessica Wood (Legal Counsel); Rebekah Kik (Deputy City Manager); David Marquardt (Deputy City Manager); Bobby Boyd (Economic Development Supervisor)

### **OTHER:**

#### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

**DIRECTOR AARDEMA CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:03 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Curt Aardema, Mayor Anderson, Jeff Breneman, Trisha Kidd, Rick Searing, Jessica Thompson

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:** Kwame Gyimah

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Clarence Lloyd, Stanley Steppes

**THE AUGUST 18, 2025 ATTENDANCE INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES IS RECORDED.**

#### **B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA**

**MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO ADOPT THE AUGUST 18, 2025 AGENDA AS PRESENTED. DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY MEETING ON JULY 21, 2025. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

# **Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes**

August 18, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

## **D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **1. Notre Dame Downtown Kalamazoo West Gateway Report Presentation**

Deputy City Manager Rebekah Kik presented the Notre Dame Downtown Kalamazoo West Gateway report, outlining strategies to reconnect WMU, Kalamazoo College, and downtown through street redesign, infill development, and stronger campus-community integration. Key proposals include simplifying and calming traffic on West Michigan Avenue, activating the St. Augustine Cathedral frontage with public-facing uses, and transforming Academy Street into a walkable residential corridor.

Concepts such as reworking complex intersections, expanding WMU's athletic facilities, adding new K-College housing, mid-block crossings, and three-story infill development were highlighted as catalytic opportunities. Kik explained that implementation will align zoning and incentives with the plan, with street design beginning in 2026 and construction anticipated in 2029.

Kik also stated that a \$38 million Protect Grant will support Arcadia Creek flood control, opening more than 70 redevelopment sites. Kik emphasized proactive planning and strong partnerships to avoid fragmented growth.

Board members expressed support, raised questions about construction timing with the 2027 arena and 2029 Spaghetti Bowl projects, and emphasized managing traffic impacts during multi-year improvements.

### **2. Financial Report – May and June 2025**

Meghan Behymer, Downtown Coordinator, reported no DEGA revenue for May or June 2025, with year-to-date revenues at \$916,037. May expenses were \$42,986 (mainly Ambassador Program, Bigbelly, social media marketing, and legal services), bringing year-to-date expenses to \$235,436. June expenses totaled \$73,934, including Ambassador Program, Bigbelly, waste disposal, consulting, professional development, City Service Agreement, and legal services, raising year-to-date expenses to \$309,417.

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**MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE MAY 2025 AND JUNE 2025 FINANCIAL REPORTS. DIRECTOR KIDD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

### 3. Downtown Report – August 2025

Meghan Behymer presented the downtown report, highlighting several key initiatives and updates. BigBelly waste and recycling units are scheduled for installation this week, with five units' installation delayed as we resolve location preparations. Director Breneman emphasized the importance of actively marketing advertising opportunities on the units, potentially through an outside firm, and the board agreed that a formal advertising policy should be established.

Regarding public restrooms, a letter on the Portland Loo was sent to the City Commission. Mayor Anderson noted the Throne restroom brand in Ann Arbor as a potential alternative model.

Director Thompson provided an overview of recent and upcoming events, including Beats on Bates, Beats & Bites—which recently attracted approximately 700 attendees—WMU Downtown Welcome Day, which will bring hundreds of students downtown from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on August 23, Sounds of the Zoo, Brush the Block Mural Festival, Tea in the Zoo, and 269 Fest.

Behymer stated that the parking plan implementation efforts continue, with significant strides in the plan come October 2025, involving the replacement of meter heads with kiosks, adjustments to paid and free parking spaces, and expanded accessible parking. Director Aardema suggested consolidating public and Board member feedback into a board letter for consideration. Meghan Behymer noted that city staff are actively communicating with businesses regarding these changes, with kiosk installation expected in late October or early November.

Behymer stated that placemaking projects at Rose Street Plaza and Farmers Alley are progressing through site plan review, with bidding anticipated in September, contracts expected in October, and construction scheduled for this fall, followed by landscaping in spring.

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Behymer also discussed the Q2 2025 Economic Vitality Study and has requested a joint presentation with Christina Anderson to connect the study's insights to the DDA/DEGA Strategic Plan.

Finally, the Ambassador Program report highlighted ongoing challenges with dumpster access in Farmers Alley, preparatory work for the Bigbelly rollout, and monitoring of downtown biohazards, with no significant changes observed from the City's pilot restroom program.

#### 4. Committee Reports

Meghan Behymer stated that the **Events and Marketing Committee** reviewed the sponsorship policy, which is up for board approval today. She noted that the **Clean and Green Committee** is meeting on August 28; they are close to finalizing the contract and start date while continuing fund development efforts. Behymer also stated that the **Business Recruitment and Retention Committee** discussed the recent economic vitality study to inform strategies and explored a potential grant opportunity. Finally, she stated that the **Executive Committee** reviewed meeting materials, including the attendance policy for board consideration; conducted two interviews for an open board seat; finalized a board member recommendation for approval by the board today; and finalized the draft 2026 budget.

### E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

#### 1. Acceptance of Board Member Resignation

The board discussed and acted on the resignation of Director Kwame Gyimah. His letter expressing the desire to step down was included in the packet. Although he remains engaged with downtown activities, personal commitments required him to step aside, with the possibility of returning later. His resignation will take effect when his successor is sworn in. The board acknowledged his valuable contributions and perspective as a downtown resident and professional.

**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF DIRECTOR GYIMAH FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY, EFFECTIVE THE DATE A SUCCESSOR IS SWORN IN, WITH**

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**GRATITUDE FOR THEIR SERVICE AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ORGANIZATION.  
DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **2. Recommendation of DEGA Board Member Nomination to Mayor and City Commission**

The board discussed nominating Cheng Kidd Sun as a new DEGA board member to the Mayor and City Commission. After a thorough interview process with two candidates, Cheng Kidd was recommended due to his downtown residency, WMU connection, and community engagement. He would fill a partial term expiring March 31, 2029, and be eligible for two additional full terms. The recommendation will go to the Mayor and City Commission for approval at their September 2 meeting, with Cheng Kidd sworn in prior to the next DEGA meeting to replace Director Gyimah, who has resigned.

**DIRECTOR THOMPSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE NOMINATION OF CHENG KIDD SUN FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY BOARD AND FORWARD THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION. DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. DIRECTOR BRENEMAN ABSTAINED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **3. DEGA Board Member Attendance Policy**

Meghan Behymer presented the DEGA board member attendance policy, explaining that while the bylaws reference non-attendance as grounds for termination, they lacked specific guidance. The new policy defines non-attendance issues as: two consecutive unnotified absences, three consecutive notified absences, or missing one-third of meetings within a 12-month period.

Ms. Behymer explained that the response process begins with the board chair contacting the member to discuss circumstances and offer support, followed by a board discussion to determine appropriate action. If termination is necessary, the chair notifies the member, requests a formal resignation within two weeks, and presents it for board acceptance. If the member fails to respond, written notice is sent, including the right to be heard, with non-response treated as a resignation.

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It was noted that terminations and appointments also require City Commission involvement, and Mayor Anderson requested a line be added to the policy to clarify this part of the process.

Ms. Behymer added that attendance will continue to be tracked monthly and the policy will be shared with all new members moving forward.

**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO ADOPT THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY BOARD ATTENDANCE POLICY WITH THE ADDITION OF A LINE THAT STATES THAT TERMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS MUST ALSO GO THROUGH THE CITY COMMISSION, TO TAKE EFFECT IMMEDIATELY UPON APPROVAL. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

#### 4. **2026 Events and Marketing Sponsorship Policy**

Meghan Behymer presented the proposed 2026 Events and Marketing Sponsorship Policy, noting it builds on the 2025 policy and incorporates lessons learned over the past year. The policy aims to grow downtown events, stimulate economic activity, and activate underutilized seasons and spaces. A key change is the shift to a quarterly review process, with specific application deadlines and post-event reporting timelines, providing more predictable planning and funding distribution. Funding levels remain \$2,500 for single-day events and \$5,000 for multi-day events, with the addition of a new \$1,000 category under development for smaller or late-submitted events.

The policy introduces a dual-track scoring rubric (55 points total), with a minimum of 40 points required for funding. Rubric criteria include strategic alignment, community impact, inclusion of underrepresented groups, event planning and feasibility, track record for established events, and seasonal activation bonuses. Geographic activation, support of local vendors/artists, and green practices are also considered.

Board members discussed timeline flexibility for early-year events and the ability to apply in advance. Behymer emphasized the concise format and clarity of the new policy, designed to simplify the process for applicants while formalizing a consistent evaluation system. Members praised the policy's thoroughness, professionalism, and potential to support continued growth of downtown events.

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**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO ADOPT THE 2026 DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY EVENTS AND MARKETING SPONSORSHIP POLICY AS PRESENTED, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **5. DDA/DEGA Strategic Plan 2025-2027**

The board reviewed the 2025–2027 strategic plan, noting that only minor updates had been made since the last presentation. Meghan Behymer highlighted adjustments based on board member feedback, including explicit recognition of ongoing downtown initiatives—placemaking, Streets for All, the downtown arena, and the transformational brownfield project. Updates also clarified roles and responsibilities, including “lead vs. support” alignments between the DDA, advisory committees, and the city, with parking no longer under DDA purview.

Looking ahead to 2026, Behymer stated that key priorities include launching a downtown-specific business retention and expansion program, formalizing a business database, conducting a pedestrian-focused wayfinding study, developing design guidelines, identifying impactful placemaking projects, evaluating and managing social district expansions, establishing clear maintenance processes, rolling out a Bigbelly sponsorship program, launching a new downtown brand, and implementing a communications plan aligned with upcoming recommendations.

Board members acknowledged the extensive work behind the plan, emphasizing that it is intended to be an active, actionable guide that aligns with the city’s economic development strategy and TIF plan.

**DIRECTOR SEARING MOTIONED TO ADOPT THE 2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN. DIRECTOR BRENEMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **6. 2026 DEGA Draft Budget**

**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO MOVE THE 2026 DEGA DRAFT BUDGET DISCUSSION ONTO THE DDA MEETING AGENDA. DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

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### **F. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

### **G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

There were no director comments.

### **H. ADJOURNMENT**

**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:45 P.M. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Downtown Economic Growth Authority  
July 2025 Financial Summary**

In July, the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) received \$12,850 revenue, bringing year-to-date revenues to \$928,887.

July expenses totaled \$63,976. Key expense categories included: **Professional and Contractual Services (\$31,795)** for the Ambassador Program (\$28,220) and Bigbelly (\$3,575); **Solid Waste Disposal (\$560)** for waste disposal costs in July; **Consulting Services and Fees (\$10,729)** for a5 Branding & Digital agreement (\$9,729) and Maestro Q3 payment for web hosting and maintenance (\$1,000); **Audit Fees (\$12,800)** for 2024 audit; **Professional Development (\$1,724)** for International Downtown Association Annual Conference Registration (\$955) and Airfare (\$330); **Memberships and Subscriptions (\$150)** for Michigan Downtown Association Annual Conference Registration; **Community Promotion (\$5,000)** for the Caribbean Festival sponsorship; and **Legal Services (\$1,656)**.

Year-to-date expenses total \$373,393.

**Contract and Agreement Snapshot** (see full table below) includes agreements the DEGA is currently entered into and the contract period.

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<b>Contract and Agreement Snapshot</b>		
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Contract Description</b>	<b>Contract Period</b>
Bee Joyful Shop	Marketing Grant Agreement	March 2025 – September 2025
Big Belly Solar	Bigbelly Units	December 2021 – May 15, 2028
Block by Block	Ambassador short-term agreement	May 2025 – October 2025
City of Kalamazoo	Service Agreement	February 2024 – February 2027
City of Kalamazoo	Loan Agreement	Dec. 2024 – Dec. 2035
Guess Who’s Dancing Fitness	Beats on Bates	February 2025 – Dec. 2025
Maestro, LLC	Website Hosting & Maintenance	January 2025 – December 2025

**Downtown Economic Growth Authority**  
**Statement of Activity**  
**7/31/2025**

**Total Available Cash** 848,430

	2025 Budget	July	2025 YTD Actuals
<b>Revenues</b>			
Taxes	883,600		874,337
Other Revenue			-
Private Contributions and Sponsorships	21,700		1,700
Contributions from COK	40,000		40,000
Contributions from Solid Waste Fund	32,000		-
Contributions from Grants	50,000		-
Transfers			-
Charges For Services			-
Interest And Rentals	-	12,850	12,850
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>1,027,300</b>	<b>12,850</b>	<b>928,887</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Operating Supplies	2,004		111
Professional And Contractual Services	502,448	31,795	194,347
Solid Waste Disposal	7,500	560	2,613
Communication And Network Services	576		-
Repairs And Maintenance Services	2,000		455
Consulting Services And Fees	55,150	10,729	19,076
Audit Fees	13,800	12,800	12,800
Legal Services	30,000	1,656	9,658
Memberships And Subscriptions	3,000	150	1,700
Professional Development	13,000	1,285	5,132
Administrative Fees	125,000		62,500
Promotion And Advertisting	10,000		-
Contribution To General Fund	20,000		-
Community Promotion	114,850	5,000	65,000
Interest Expense - Notes Payable	52,400		-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>951,728</b>	<b>63,976</b>	<b>373,393</b>
<b>Revenues Less Expenses</b>	<b>75,572</b>	<b>(51,126)</b>	<b>555,494</b>

**Notes:**

**Long Term Debt:**

Mavcon Agreement		TBD
City of Kalamazoo		1,060,000

**Professional And Contractual Services:**

	July	2025 YTD Actuals
Recycling Services - BIG BELLY SOLAR LLC	3,575	25,025
Ambassador Services - BLOCK BY BLOCK	28,220	169,322
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,795</b>	<b>194,347</b>

**Community Promotion:**

Beats on Bates Events - Sponsorship		50,000
Bee Joyful - Social Media Marketing & Mgt		10,000
Caribbean Festival Sponsorship- Xperience Inc	5,000	5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>65,000</b>

# SEPTEMBER 2025 UPDATE

## Downtown Kalamazoo

### Downtown Kalamazoo: Creative & Collaborative This Month

■ \$4,220

Downtown Dollars Spent

■ 350 pounds

Litter Picked Up

■ 4

New Murals Downtown



*Members of Rico Enterprises, Downtown Ambassador team, and Downtown Coordinator celebrate the installation of new Bigbelly waste and recycling units across the downtown.*

### 3-year Strategic Plan Approved

August marked a milestone for Downtown Kalamazoo with the approval of the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan. This three-year roadmap provides clear direction across our six pillars and sets the stage for continued growth.

Since approval, we have been aligning committee agendas, board discussions, and reporting tools—including this Downtown Report—to reflect the plan. These adjustments ensure that everyone stays informed, accountable, and focused on advancing our workplan and tracking progress.

The result is a stronger framework to measure impact, celebrate achievements, and stay on course toward our shared vision for downtown.

### Doubling Up on Clean!

*This month's feature story making the Downtown Strategic Plan real.*

Downtown's Bigbelly expansion is here! In late August, 21 new waste and recycling units were installed across the district, with five more to follow once final site preparations are complete. Together, this will more than double downtown's system capacity—an exciting step forward that you can already see on the street.

The new units bring consistency, reduce litter, and create more opportunities for recycling, all while keeping our downtown looking clean and inviting.

This project also reflects what makes progress possible in Kalamazoo: collaboration. Rico Enterprises led the installation effort, and our Downtown Ambassadors supported planning and will continue caring for each unit every day.

# Built for Business

Downtown is a launchpad for growth—where businesses are rooted, visible, and thriving.

## 2025 PILLAR PROGRESS

### Built for Business

#### Recruitment Marketing Piece

##### In progress

- Updating data/content in September
- Creating list of recipients in September
- First round of outreach scheduled for October

#### Launch Business Newsletter

##### In progress

- Finalizing draft with September goal launch
- Design will adapt with downtown branding in future

### Downtown Dollars

In August, Downtown Dollars sales totaled \$12,255—fueled by three major purchases. At the same time, \$4,220 was redeemed at 23 businesses downtown.

Month	# of Businesses that Redeemed DT\$ (% of total)	Total Sold	Total Spent
January	20 (38%)	\$935	\$1,785
February	18 (34%)	\$620	\$850
March	17 (30%)	\$785	\$1,190
April	23 (41%)	\$900	\$2,740
May	19 (34%)	\$3,740	\$1,425
June	16 (28%)	\$1,450	\$1,045
July	13 (23%)	\$580	\$915
August	23 (46%)	\$12,255	\$4,220
<b>2025 TOTAL</b>	<b>31 (55%)</b>	<b>\$21,265</b>	<b>\$14,170</b>

#### Program Life Stats

**\$518K**  
SOLD

**\$365K**  
SPENT

**\$143K**  
IN CIRCULATION

**Program led by:** Bobby Boyd (Economic Development Supervisor); Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator)

#### COMMITTEE REPORT

### Business Recruitment & Retention

- Discussed and reviewed September 2025 Economic Vitality Study presentation
- Reviewed first draft of Business Welcome Letter
- Finalized next steps for recruitment marketing piece

### Economic Vitality Study

A collaborative research initiative between the City and WMU designed to better understand the economic health of Downtown Kalamazoo. The study aims to evaluate short- and long-term impacts of major downtown infrastructure projects, business activity trends, and the effectiveness of public investments.

- Q2 2025 report provided to City

**Study led by:** Center for Transportation and Livability at Western Michigan University – Dr. Jun Oh with City staff Christina Anderson (Planning); Dennis Randolph (Public Services); Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator); and Rebekah Kik (City Manager Liaison)



Southwest Michigan First Chamber  
**Downtown Kalamazoo  
Business Townhall**

October 14, 2025 @ 2 p.m.

180 East Water Street  
Kalamazoo, Mich. 49007

# Clean, Safe & Welcoming

Downtown is a place you want to be—inviting, well cared for, and safe for everyone.

## 2025 PILLAR PROGRESS

### Clean, Safe & Welcoming

#### Ambassador Program Agreement

##### In progress

New Ambassador Program contract starting Oct. 1, 2025.

- Clean & Green Committee is recommending a scope of work for Q4 2025 to meet our current needs and align with existing hours.
- In 2026, Ambassador hours of operations will shift to
  - **Off Peak (Nov. 1 – April 14):** 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
  - **Peak (April 15 – Oct. 31):** Sundays: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays: 8 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays: 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.

#### Bigbelly Expansion

##### Completed

The Bigbelly expansion effort is completed (mostly!) We are still coordinating a handful of site preparations so that we can install five remaining units. Additionally, the replacement unit for the one damaged earlier this year, is expected to arrive in November.

With the expansion in the rearview, we still have some efforts related to Bigbelly underway:

- Integration of waste audit findings into developed signage and messaging by Bigbelly units.
- Disposal of traditional green units

#### Mall Maintenance Agreement Update

##### In progress

Staff are collaborating with City partners to modernize the 2009 Mall Maintenance Agreement, updating both the division of responsibilities and cost allocations. A draft scope and cost estimate are in preparation and will first be considered by the Clean & Green Committee, then advanced to the Executive Committee and Board.

## COMMITTEE REPORT

### Clean & Green

- **Reviewed progress on Clean, Safe & Welcoming 2025 workplan:**
  - Ambassador Program Q4 2025 proposal
  - Bigbelly expansion next steps including follow-up with Metro Transit and the waste audit
  - Mall Maintenance Agreement; committee members will walk Mall and identify maintenance needs.
- **Reviewed progress on Streetwise & Connected 2025 workplan:**
  - Public Realm Asset Mapping.

### Ambassador Program

August marked an important transition for the Ambassador Program. With the near-complete installation of Bigbelly waste and recycling units, trash and recycling are now tracked separately, providing better insight into downtown's waste stream. In addition, the familiar green trash receptacles were retired, signaling a new era of consistent, modern infrastructure for waste management downtown.

**>>> Full August 2025 Report on following pages**

**Program led by:** [Meghan Behymer \(Downtown Coordinator\)](#)

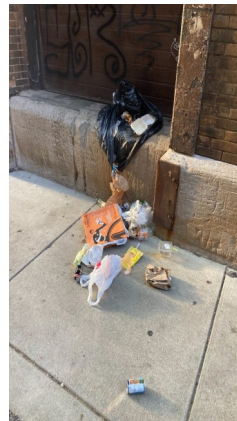
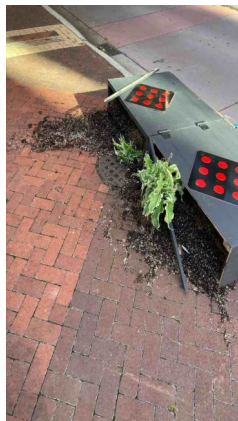
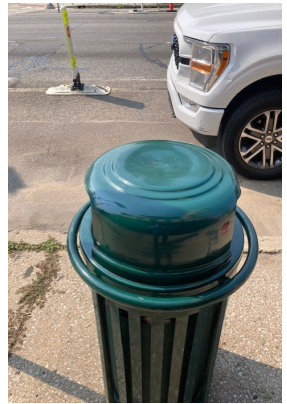


# DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO

## AMBASSADOR PROGRAM AUGUST 2025 REPORT



# AROUND TOWN IN AUGUST

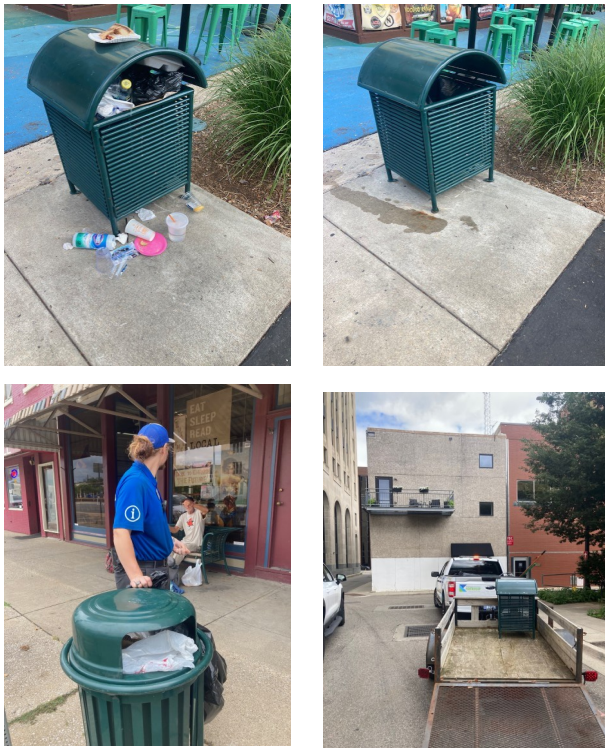


# AUGUST 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



## Events and Handbills

It is common when an event takes place that the group putting the event on will try and spread the word using handbills. This is against ordinances. During the rental process of any of the programmable spaces downtown the organizers of the events should know that this practice is not accepted without proper approvals.



## Happy Retirement to the Green Receptacles

The green trash receptacles have been pulled out of the district with the exception of a handful of that remain until the last of the Big Belly units are installed.

# PROGRAM UPDATES

## Recycling and Trash Split Into Separate Stats.



A Statistic was added to track Recycling collected from Big Belly units now that they are the standard unit throughout the district. Recycling used to be included in the "Trash" Statistic. We deemed it worthwhile to split it off now that Recycling is widely available throughout the district. The change took place on August 23.

Trash (lbs)	2350	4700	625	725	<b>8400</b>
Recycling (lbs)	175	400			<b>575</b>





August 2025 Stats By Zone					
	East	Kalamazoo Mall	North	West	Total
<b>CLEANING</b>					
Abandoned Property	45	49	8	12	<b>114</b>
Area Cleaned	5	17		2	<b>24</b>
Biohazardous Material	11	5		3	<b>19</b>
Restroom Cleaned/Stocked	57				<b>57</b>
Graffiti - Removed	18	29	1	3	<b>51</b>
Lawn Care (hours)					<b>0</b>
Leaf Removal (hours)	1	4	0	0	<b>5</b>
Power Washing (hours)					<b>0</b>
Snow Removal (hours)					<b>0</b>
Litter (lbs)	125	100	0	125	<b>350</b>
Trash (lbs)	2350	4700	625	725	<b>8400</b>
Recycling (lbs)	175	400			<b>575</b>
Flower Watering (gallons)	168	146	0	170	<b>484</b>
Weed Abatement (block faces)	1	3	0	0	<b>4</b>
Special Project (hours)					<b>0</b>

### August 2025 Stats By Zone

	East	Kalamazoo Mall	North	West	Total
<b>CLEANING</b>					
Abandoned Property	45	49	8	12	<b>114</b>
Area Cleaned	5	17		2	<b>24</b>
Biohazardous Material	11	5		3	<b>19</b>
Restroom Cleaned/Stocked	57				<b>57</b>
Graffiti - Removed	18	29	1	3	<b>51</b>
Lawn Care (hours)					<b>0</b>
Leaf Removal (hours)	1	4	0	0	<b>5</b>
Power Washing (hours)					<b>0</b>
Snow Removal (hours)					<b>0</b>
Litter (lbs)	125	100	0	125	<b>350</b>
Trash (lbs)	2350	4700	625	725	<b>8400</b>
Recycling (lbs)	175	400			<b>575</b>
Flower Watering (gallons)	168	146	0	170	<b>484</b>
Weed Abatement (block faces)	1	3	0	0	<b>4</b>
Special Project (hours)					<b>0</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>					
Business Contact		3			<b>3</b>
Hospitality Assistance	12	11	3	4	<b>30</b>
<b>SAFETY</b>					
Observed Visible Alcohol/Drug Use	8	1	0	4	<b>13</b>
Interaction With Alcohol/Drug Use	4	0	3	2	<b>9</b>
Needles Found	2				<b>2</b>
Panhandling - Aggressive					<b>0</b>
Panhandling - Passive					<b>0</b>
Public Defecation/Urination					<b>0</b>
Safety Escorts	1				<b>1</b>
<b>OUTREACH</b>					
Transient	25	16	3	9	<b>53</b>
Unhoused/Sleeping	37	31	6	10	<b>84</b>
Unsheltered Relocation	3	4	0	0	<b>7</b>


# KDP Zone Map

**KDP Zones**

-  Kalamazoo Mall
-  North
-  West
-  East


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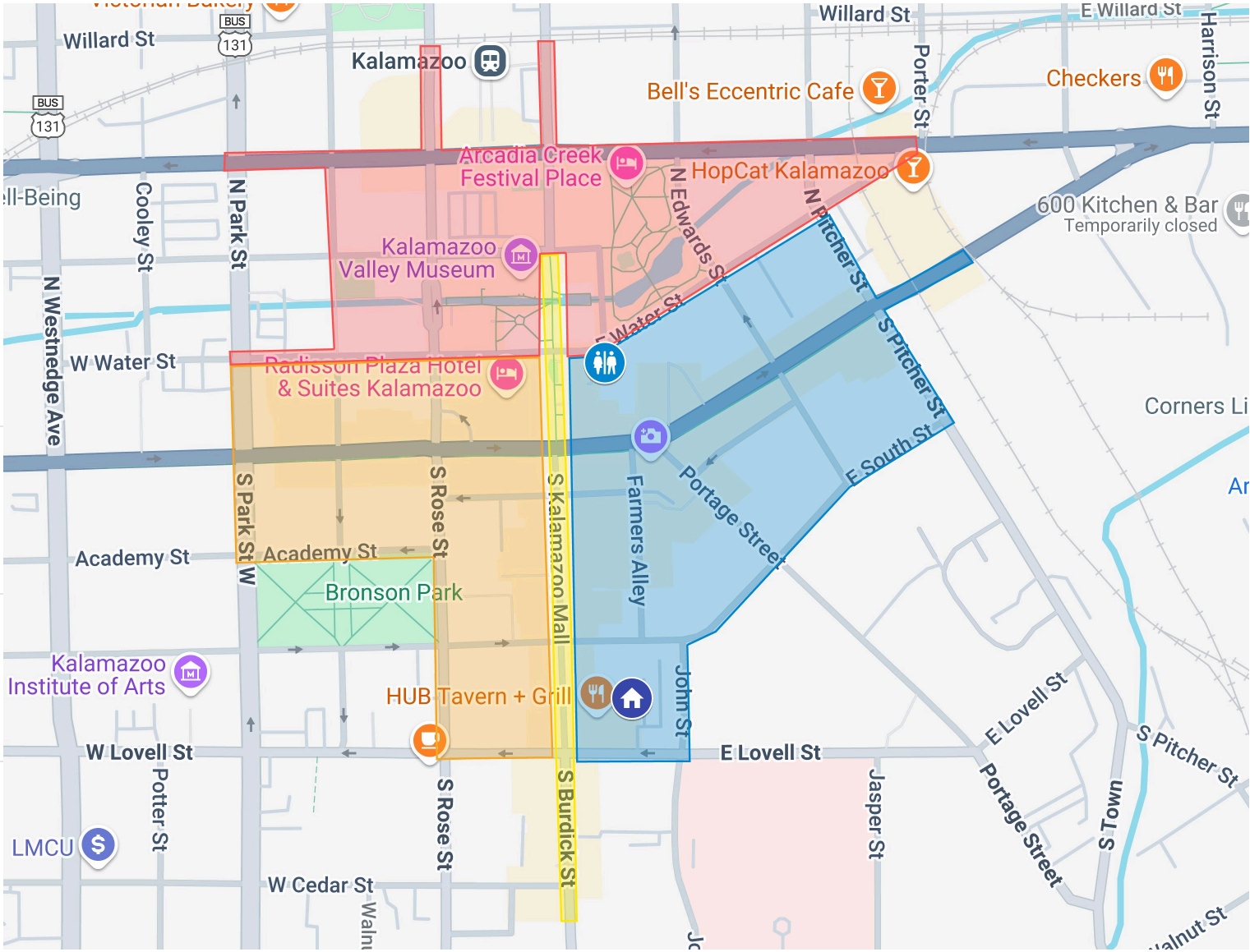
**Restroom**

-  Portland Loo

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**Operations Center**

-  Operations Center



**2025 STATISTICS**

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
<b>CLEANING</b>													
Abandoned Property	119	201	301	433	276	215	241	114					1900
Area Cleaned	27	39	105	43	47	38	40	24					363
Biohazardous Material	36	40	42	56	59	28	30	19					310
Restroom Cleaned/Stocked	23	41	50	55	58	56	63	57					403
Graffiti - Removed	20	31	95	103	53	64	37	51					454
Lawn Care (hours)													0
Leaf Removal (hours)	6	4	10		6	3	2	5					36
Power Washing (hours)				44	51								95
Snow Removal (hours)	122	38											160
Litter (lbs)				1175	575	200	525	350					2825
Trash (lbs)	6800	5775	8425	10200	9225	11325	11275	8400					71425
Recycling (lbs)								575					575
Flower Watering (gallons)						794		484					1278
Weed Abatement (block faces)				11	10	30	9	4					64
Special Project (hours)		1	9		30	32							72
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>													
Business Contact	27	41	16	18	4	7	1	3					117
Hospitality Assistance	43	25	41	47	33	59	49	30					327
<b>SAFETY</b>													
Observed Visible Alcohol/Drug Use	11	12	12	41	7	6	7	13					109
Interaction With Alcohol/Drug Use			7	11		6		9					33
Needles Found	5			7	8		7	2					29
Panhandling - Aggressive				1	1			0					2
Panhandling - Passive		1		1	7	1	2	0					12
Public Defecation/Urination	1					1		0					2
Safety Escorts	1	8	1	3			1	1					15
<b>OUTREACH</b>													
Transient	28	24	53	114	144	116	92	53					624
Unhoused/Sleeping	110	94	206	296	157	137	112	84					1196
Unsheltered Relocation	30	9	12	28	4	4	6	7					100

# Place with Purpose

Downtown is shaped with intention—where every corner, plaza, and park reflects community and connection.

## 2025 PILLAR PROGRESS

### Place with Purpose

#### Identify Role in Downtown Placemaking

##### In progress

- Executive Committee met to discuss Bates Alley Maintenance, current and future needs.
- Progress toward designs and construction of Rose St. Plaza and Farmer’s Alley placemaking projects continue.

#### Begin Downtown Design Guidelines Effort

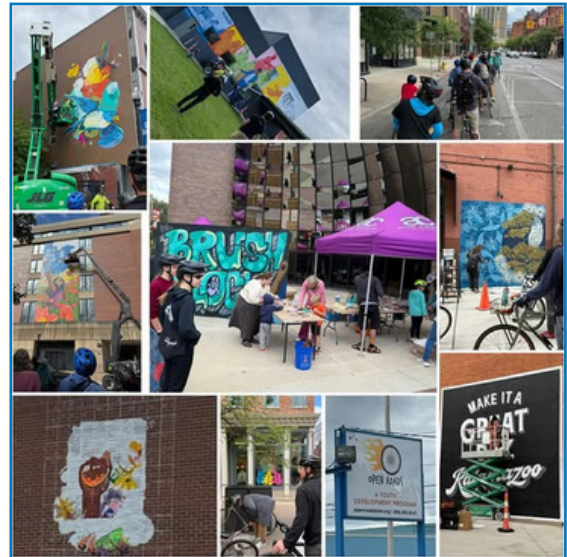
##### Not started

### Portland Loo

To address the need for additional public restrooms downtown, the Kalamazoo City Commission approved the purchase of a Portland Loo in early June 2025. The Portland Loo will take approximately 18 weeks to arrive, with full installation taking place 37 weeks after site selection.



In August, DDA/DEGA finalized a letter of recommendation for the second Portland Loo, which was sent to City Commissioners and business survey participants. We now await further action from City Commission.



### Brush the Block

September 2-7, 2025



The first-ever Brush the Block mural festival was a huge success, bringing new energy and artistry to our community.

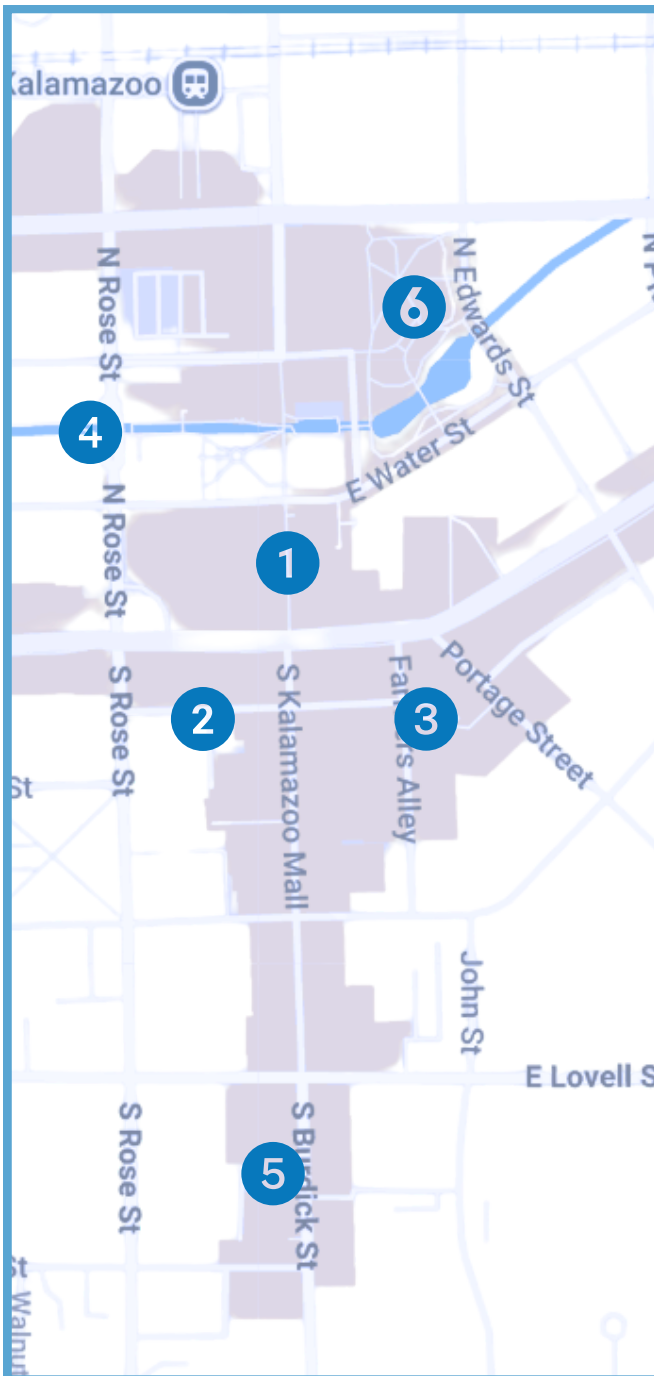
Over the course of the week, six building facades were transformed by seven acclaimed muralists, with four of the murals located right in the downtown core. One mural even features local business owners, creating a lasting connection between art and commerce.

The festival not only added vibrant, permanent works of public art, but also showcased community pride and collaboration, strengthening Kalamazoo’s identity as a cultural destination

 Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo

## Downtown Placemaking

Downtown Placemaking seeks to add to the vibrancy with another alley activation, plaza redesigns that act as connectors, and enhancing the experience of the Kalamazoo Mall as a more active and engaging place.



**Project led by:** Rebekah Kik (Deputy City Manager), Christina Anderson (City Planner, Deputy Director of Community Planning and Economic Development), Patrick McVerry (Parks and Recreation); Dennis Randolph (Public Services), and Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator)

- 1 North Kalamazoo Mall**  
Construction project - pending federal grant approval
- 2 Exchange Place**  
Mural project - pending property owner approval
- 3 Farmer's Alley**  
Project is moving forward with construction documents to improve the concrete plaza, lighting, and landscaping.
- 4 Rose Street Plaza**  
Project is moving forward with construction documents to improve the concrete plaza with furniture and landscaping. Coordination currently underway with adjacent property owners to partner on improvements on the public/private areas.
- 5 South Burdick (Lovell to Cedar)**  
Currently on hold awaiting budget or grant opportunity.
- 6 Arcadia Creek Festival Place**  
ACFP is undergoing a major renovation to improve infrastructure such as electrical and landscaping, supported by \$3.6 million in grants from the MEDC and City Commission, with additional funding being pursued for the \$14M project.

**Open House!** Join us on Sept. 30 from 6-7:30 p.m. at KVCC's Anna Whitten Hall to see the final design, along with the construction timeline and project phasing.

# Streetwise & Connected

Downtown is a place that moves with people—intuitive, walkable, and easy to explore.

## 2025 PILLAR PROGRESS

### Streetwise & Connected

#### Map Public Realm Assets

##### In progress

- **Completed:** light pole banners; Bigbelly
- **Assigned:** electrical outlets; benches & tables
- **Not Started:** bike racks/corrals; wayfinding; planters

#### Identify Fund Opportunities for Wayfinding

##### Ongoing

### Kalamazoo Streets for All

Kalamazoo Streets For All is a lane conversion project that will transform downtown Kalamazoo into a welcoming, inclusive and vibrant destination that offers safe travel for all modes of transportation.

Updates can be found at: <https://www.kalamazoo.org/Community/Projects/Streets-for-All>



**Project led by:** Rebekah Kik (Deputy City Manager), Christina Anderson (City Planner, Deputy Director of Community Planning and Economic Development), and James Baker (Director, Public Services) with Consultants from Progressive AE, C2D, and Wightman Engineering



### Downtown Banners

The Ambassador team has been conducting a full mapping and inventory of downtown banners, with a final report forthcoming. This work serves several important purposes:

1. Creating an up-to-date map of all light pole/banner locations.
2. Identifying banners in need of replacement, with potential to draw from existing backstock.
3. Identifying light poles and/or banner brackets requiring repair.

Banners are one of the most visible elements of our downtown streetscape and play a key role in conveying a welcoming and well-maintained environment. This inventory is the first step toward ensuring consistency and quality across the banner program, while also positioning us to better understand costs and future opportunities for program growth.

## Parking Plan Implementation

The Parking Blueprint is organized into four sections defined by the following shared strategic objectives: (1) expanding parking supply/capacity; (2) managing parking demand; (3) improving/ expanding mobility options; and (4) improving parking operations.

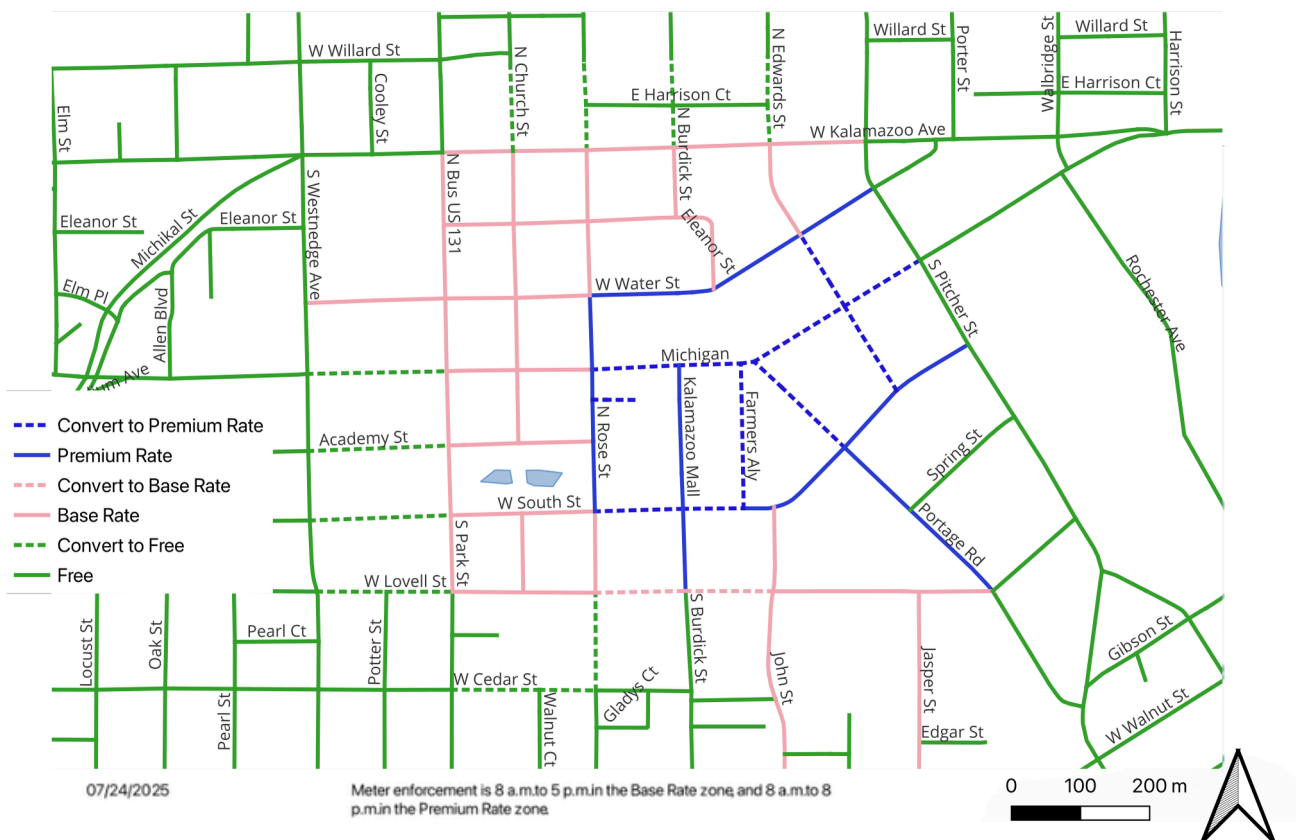
As part of the City's broader Parking+ Blueprint, new parking updates launching in **October 2025** aim to make it easier, fairer, and more accessible for everyone to find a space.

### First, what's staying the same?

- ✔ **Mobile Pay Options.** You can still park with ease using ParkMobile or Oobeo, or at pay stations and single-space meters throughout the downtown.
- ✔ **Still Free in the Ramps!** Enjoy 90 minutes free in the Epic and Kalamazoo ramps—available since 2023.

### Now, here's what is changing:

- ✔ **Smarter Pricing by Demand.** Metered blocks will align with parking demand—higher on busy streets, lower or free on others.
- ✔ **More Barrier-Free Access.** New accessible parking spaces will be added to better serve all users.



**Project led by:** Led by Rob Bacigalupi (Mission North Consulting) with City staff Christina Anderson (Planning); Dennis Randolph (Public Services); and Rebekah Kik (City Manager's Office Liaison)

# Vibrant & Visible

Downtown is unmistakable—distinct in identity, celebrated in stories, and recognized for its energy and edge.

## 2025 PILLAR PROGRESS

### Vibrant & Visible

#### Downtown Brand Identity

*In progress*

First design options reviewed by Events & Marketing Committee; second round in early October. Expected recommendation to come forth for Board review in November 2025, with implementation to follow.

#### Events & Marketing Sponsorship Policy

*Completed*

Events & Marketing Sponsorship Policy and Application approved by DEGA Board at August 2025 meeting. Application form updated and past applicants and recipients will be notified of updated process. Next deadline is October 15 for Q1 2026 events.

Access sponsorship packet [here](#).

#### Downtown Banner Program

*In progress*

- Awaiting final brand identity to begin discussions on potential banner opportunities.
- Thank you to Director Lloyd for spearheading efforts to identify a printing partner.

## NEWS UPDATE

- [Downtown Kalamazoo bar scene expands with new non-alcoholic option](#)
- [Kalamazoo to celebrate future event center with block party, groundbreaking ceremony](#)
- [Harvey's on the Mall to close in September after 40 years in downtown Kalamazoo](#)
- [Brush the Block brings new murals, community art to downtown Kalamazoo](#)

## COMMITTEE REPORT

### Events & Marketing

- Met with a5 to review Brand Book and round one of designs.



## Upcoming Events

### **Beats on Bates** ★

*Bates Alley*

Every Wednesday, June - September, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

### **Canadiana Festival** ★

*Arcadia Creek Festival Place*

September 20, 2025

### **Sounds of the Zoo** ★

*Downtown Kalamazoo/Bronson Park*

September 22 - 28, 2025

### **269 FEST**

*Downtown & City of Kalamazoo*

September 20 - 27, 2025

 **Skylar Belsar** ★ **Supported by DEGA**

# Strong & Sustainable

Downtown is backed by strong leadership—resilient in structure, bold in vision, and prepared for what’s next.

## 2025 PILLAR PROGRESS

### Strong & Sustainable

#### Conduct Capacity Audit

*In progress*

- Executive Committee discussed potential for an additional staff to support the work of DDA/DEGA

#### DDA Development Plan

*Not started*

## COMMITTEE REPORT

### Executive & Finance

- Reviewed September Board Agenda and Content
- Reviewed 2026 draft budgets for DDA and DEGA
- Met with downtown parking staff (City, consultant, Park Kalamazoo) to discuss upcoming parking changes.
- Conducted a Bates Alley walkthrough to inform next steps for maintenance and future vision

## Additional Updates

- **New Board Member.** In August, both DDA and DEGA approved a recommendation to the Mayor and City Commission for Cheng Kidd Sun to join the Board of Directors. The nomination is on the September 15 City Commission agenda.
- **Data Capacity.** City Economic Development team working with Discover Kalamazoo to capture regular Placer.ai reporting. Focus downtown is to establish a recurring baseline of downtown foot traffic and event impact data to inform work plans and keep board members aware of trends.
- **Business Community Homelessness and Housing Framework Input Session.** Members of our business community attended an input session on Sept. 11.

**To:** Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board of Directors

**From:** Clean and Green Committee

**Date:** September 15, 2025

**Subject:** Recommendation to Apply Ambassador Program Budget Variance to Q4 2025 Services

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## **Background**

In July 2025, the Board awarded a new contract with Block by Block for the Downtown Ambassador Program. At the time, the 2026 budget of \$399,548 was built on the assumption that the new contract rate (~\$35,500/month) would begin in May 2025. In practice, the new contract was not executed until July, and the existing contract rate of \$28,220.39/month will remain in place through September.

This timing difference has resulted in a budget variance of approximately \$39,064 in unspent funds within the Ambassador Program line item.

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## **Proposal**

The Clean & Green Committee reviewed an updated scope from Block by Block that allows this variance to be reinvested into October–December 2025 services under the new contract. Specifically, the proposal would:

- Expand coverage hours and deployment during the busy Q4 period.
  - Retain current operating levels before the transition to the reduced 2026 scope.
  - Keep all funds within the Ambassador Program, ensuring alignment with budget intent.
- 

## **Rationale**

Reinvesting the variance directly into the Ambassador Program ensures that every dollar budgeted for 2025 is fully utilized rather than left to lapse. Applying these funds to the final quarter of the year also comes at an ideal time, as downtown experiences some of its highest levels of activity during the holiday season, with expanded programming and increased visitation. Enhanced coverage during this period will provide meaningful benefits to both downtown businesses and visitors. Finally, this approach helps maintain continuity of service as the program transitions into its new 2026 scope, bridging the gap while longer-term funding solutions are pursued.

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## **Recommendation**

**The Clean & Green Committee recommends that the DEGA Board approve the allocation of the \$39,064 budget variance to expand Ambassador Program services during October–December 2025 under the new Block by Block contract.**

## Budget Summary

BUDGET SUMMARY		
Category	\$	%
Labor	\$ 379,964.82	65.29%
Benefits	\$ 47,731.56	8.20%
Labor Related (background checks, recruiting, awards, etc.)	\$ 5,704.02	0.98%
Uniforms	\$ 9,426.43	1.62%
Equipment (Truck, ATLVs, Gator 'capital' equipment)	\$ 42,852.97	7.36%
Equipment Related (fuel, maintenance, insurance, parking)	\$ 14,583.86	2.51%
Janitorial Supplies	\$ 7,020.00	1.21%
Cell Phones	\$ 1,976.00	0.34%
Office/Storage Location	\$ 2,220.00	0.38%
Water (Pressure Washer & Office Location)	\$ -	0.00%
Dumpster / Trash	\$ -	0.00%
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	\$ 1,740.00	0.30%
Corporate Travel	\$ 3,331.00	0.57%
Taxes, License & Miscellaneous	\$ 3,500.00	0.60%
Administrative Support (Legal, Risk, Payroll Services, Corp Support)	\$ 13,894.33	2.39%
Profit (9.0% of total)	\$ 48,055.05	8.26%
<b>ANNUAL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 582,000.04</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Monthly Flat Bill</b>	<b>\$ 48,500.00</b>	

## Deployment

3 month budget

October 1 to December 31, 2025

Position	Zone	Task	Hours	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Total				
Cleaning Ambassadors	All	Manual Cleaning	7am- 330pm	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56				
	All	Manual Cleaning/Projects	7am- 330pm	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56				
	All	Manual Cleaning	7am- 330pm				8	8	8		24				
Hybrid/Safety & Clean Ambassador	All	Hybrid Clean & Safe Patrol	11am-730pm			8	8	8			24				
			230pm-11pm						8	8	16				
Team Leader	All	Supervision Hybrid Clean & Safe Patrol	7am- 330pm	8							8	16			
			11am-730pm			8	8	8				24			
			230pm-11pm						8	8		16			
Operations Manager	All	Working Manager	Varies		8	8	8	8	8		40				
				<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>40</b>					
<b>Total Scheduled Weekly Hours</b>				<b>FTE's Per Day</b>				<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>272</b>

September 15, 2025

City of Kalamazoo  
241 W. South Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

**Subject: Letter of Support for the “Kalamazoo Downtown Revitalization: Key Public Space Connections” Project**

Dear City of Kalamazoo,

On behalf of the Kalamazoo Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA), we are writing to express our strong support for the City of Kalamazoo’s Michigan Talent Partnership (MTP) grant application for the “Kalamazoo Downtown Revitalization: Key Public Space Connections” project.

The Arcadia Creek Festival Place has long been a cornerstone of Downtown Kalamazoo. As a venue for signature events and community gatherings, it drives thousands of visitors downtown each year, directly supporting the restaurants, shops, and cultural institutions that make our city vibrant. However, with aging infrastructure and rising maintenance costs, the site requires reinvestment to remain a competitive and welcoming regional destination.

This project directly aligns with the priorities outlined in the 2025–2027 DDA/DEGA Strategic Plan, particularly our goals of strengthening downtown as a place with purpose, ensuring a clean, safe, and welcoming environment, and supporting sustainable economic growth. Revitalizing the Festival Place and enhancing the KRVT connection to the Event Center will not only improve quality of life for residents and visitors, but also stimulate downtown businesses, attract new investment, and strengthen connectivity across the district.

With transformational downtown street improvements beginning in 2026 and the new Event Center under construction just blocks away, the timing of this project is both urgent and opportune. It provides a once-in-a-generation chance to create a reimagined anchor public space that ties together multiple catalytic projects and reinforces Kalamazoo’s position as a thriving regional hub.

As the public entities charged with stewarding downtown’s vitality, the DDA and DEGA fully support the City’s application and encourage its funding. We are confident in the City’s ability to successfully implement this project and in its potential to strengthen downtown Kalamazoo for decades to come.

Please feel free to contact us at 269-492-2692 or caardema@avbinc.com should you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Curt Aardema, Board Chair  
Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Economic Growth Authority Boards