

Agenda

Downtown Economic Growth Authority

Board of Directors



City of Kalamazoo

Monday, December 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 November 17, 2025. (**Action: Motion to approve**)

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report - October 2025 (**Action: Motion to accept the October 2025 Downtown Economic Growth Authority financial statement**)
2. Peregrine-Peninsula Lofts - Step Aside Request Presentation (Natalie Valentine)

3. Downtown Report

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Foodservice Packaging Institute Memorandum of Understanding (**Action: Motion to authorize Board Chair to sign the Foodservice Packaging Institute Memorandum of Understanding in consultation with legal counsel**)

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

H. ADJOURNMENT

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

PRESENT: Curt Aardema, Jeff Breneman, Clarence Lloyd, Rick Searing, Jessica Thompson, Cheng Kidd Sun, Mayor David Anderson

EXCUSED: Trisha Kidd, Stanley Steppes

STAFF: Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator), Erin Hahn (Community Investment Administrative Assistant), Jessica Wood (Attorney)

A. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT: Curt Aardema, Jeff Breneman, Clarence Lloyd, Rick Searing, Jessica Thompson, Cheng Kidd Sun, Mayor David Anderson

EXCUSED: Trisha Kidd, Stanley Steppes

THE NOVEMBER 17, 2025 ATTENDANCE, INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, IS RECORDED.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Meghan Behymer, Downtown Coordinator, stated that the agenda should be amended to move the Downtown Branding presentation to be first, after approval of the minutes and the financial report.

DIRECTOR SEARING MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. DIRECTOR BRENEMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY BOARD ON OCTOBER 20, 2025. DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report

Behymer presented the September 2025 Financial Report, stating that the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) received no revenue, leaving year-to-date revenues

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

at \$928,000. Key expense categories included Professional and Contractual Services, Consulting Services and Fees, Legal Services, Professional Development, and Administrative Fees. Year-to-date expenses total \$488,551.

DIRECTOR THOMPSON MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2025 DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY FINANCIAL REPORT. DIRECTOR BRENEMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Downtown Branding

The board received an updated presentation from a5 Branding & Digital on the Downtown Kalamazoo branding work, building on feedback from the previous meeting and the Events & Marketing Committee. a5 reviewed refinements to the positioning statement and key messages, including stronger emphasis on education and lifelong learning, Kalamazoo's role as a cultural hub, and the blend of historic character and modern energy. They also presented updates to the visual identity, including the hand-rendered K, expanded color palette, patterns, and examples of how the brand could appear on construction fencing, placemaking signage, window clings, wayfinding elements, and promotional materials. Board members noted the improvements, especially shifting secondary taglines ("Sincerely," "Let's Go," etc.) to a supporting role and incorporating education more prominently. One board member raised concern about the term "small city," noting Kalamazoo's role as the region's primary urban center. Overall, the board felt the revisions aligned with prior feedback. The board then amended the agenda to move forward with a vote on the item immediately following the presentation.

DIRECTOR SEARING MOTIONED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO VOTE ON THE DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO BRANDING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION. DIRECTOR SUN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO BRANDING RECOMMENDED AND OUTLINED BY A5 BRANDING & DIGITAL. DIRECTOR SUN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

3. 2025 Beats on Bates Presentation

Kim Guess presented an overview of the 2025 Beats on Bates season, which ran weekly from June 4–September 24 on Bates Alley. She reported that the event remains one of downtown Kalamazoo's strongest summer draws, featuring 17 weeks of free concerts with a diverse lineup of 16 bands and 6 DJs. Attendance continues to rise, up 16% over the past

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

two years, averaging 2,500 visits per week with high-dwell times. Businesses on the alley reported a 15–25% revenue boost, and two additional bars are expected to open in 2025, expanding the corridor’s economic impact.

Guess noted strong out-of-town attendance and emphasized that visitors frequently comment that comparable cities lack similar programming. She highlighted zero safety incidents over the past two years and credited growth to strong partnerships and sponsorships. She also outlined future needs, including a formal safety plan, possible event footprint expansion, improved coordination with KDPS, avoiding over-commercialization, and exploring volunteer crews and business tie-ins.

Director Thompson provided marketing updates, noting major growth in social reach following the launch of standalone Beats on Bates social channels, expanded media coverage, and highly successful cross-promotion among partners, performers, and local organizations.

Board members praised the program’s inclusivity, community impact, and economic value, and suggested exploring additional metrics, volunteer incentives, and ways to engage more businesses. Concerns were raised about business reliance on the event and ensuring equity for businesses not located on the alley. Guess noted ongoing conversations with business owners and potential expansion concepts for future seasons.

DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO VOTE ON THE BEATS ON BATES AGREEMENT DIRECTLY FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD CHAIR TO AMEND AND EXTEND THE BEATS ON BATES AGREEMENT WITH GUESS WHO’S DANCING FITNESS, LLC FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR IN CONSULTATION WITH THE AUTHORITY’S LEGAL COUNSEL. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Downtown Report

Behymer presented the Downtown Report, highlighting that downtown business activity and recruitment continue, with recent outreach and marketing underway. The Downtown Dollars program shows \$705 redeemed and \$138,000 remaining in circulation.

Ambassadors are supporting maintenance, leaf collection, lighting, and snow melt system repairs. Placemaking projects include Bates Alley Parklets (recommendations

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

expected December), Portland Loo installation (open by December 30), and coordination for downtown festivals, some temporarily relocated due to construction. Farmer’s Alley and Rose Street Plaza projects are progressing, but work may not begin until spring.

Wayfinding updates are planned in early 2026 with new branding, and Streets for All construction communications are in the planning process. Board vacancies and a new staff position will be addressed in Q1 2026. Cross-branding opportunities for Big Belly containers are being explored to enhance downtown visibility.

5. Downtown Parking Plan Update

The board reviewed updates on the downtown parking plan. Key points included delaying the rollout of premium paid parking zones until early 2026 to accommodate the 2025 holiday season, shifting enforcement hours to 10 a.m.–8 p.m., introducing short-term “flex” spaces for quick pickups, and removing select side streets from premium zones. There was agreement on the need for clear communication and marketing to both businesses and customers before implementing changes.

Concerns were raised about the disconnect between financial operations and the customer experience, emphasizing that the system should be user-friendly and not feel punitive. The City has agreed to quarterly meetings with the board, but there’s a desire for more proactive involvement and alignment on goals. The board discussed the importance of clear messaging about free or easy parking options, coordinating with the city, and ensuring leadership engagement with upcoming changes. Next steps include scheduling regular meetings with city planners and parking staff, followed by a January meeting with the new city manager before any implementation occurs.

6. 2026 Board and Committee Meeting Calendar

The board reviewed and approved the 2026 meeting and event calendar.

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE 2026 BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR AS PRESENTED. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Public Comments

None.

8. Director Comments

None.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5 P.M.

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

In October, the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) received no revenue, leaving the year-to-date revenues to \$928,887.

October expenses totaled \$81,710. Key expense categories included: **Professional and Contractual Services (\$64,288)** for Bigbelly services August through November including new bins and bin installations (\$36,068) and Ambassador Services for September (\$28,220); **Consulting Services and Fees (\$8,175)** for Q4 Maestro payment for web hosting and maintenance (\$1,000) and a5 Branding & Digital agreement (\$7,175); **Community Promotion (\$5,000)** for Sounds of the Zoo event sponsorship; **Solid Waste (\$2,256)**; **Legal Services (\$1,495)**; **Professional Development (\$496)** for International Downtown Association Annual Conference travel expenses.

Year-to-date expenses total \$570,260.

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

Contract and Agreement Snapshot		
Contractor	Contract Description	Contract Period
Bee Joyful Shop	Marketing Grant Agreement	March 2025 – September 2025
Big Belly Solar	Bigbelly Units	December 2021 – May 15, 2028
<i>Block by Block</i>	<i>Ambassador Program Agreement</i>	<i>October 2025 – Sept. 2028</i>
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
10/31/2025

Total Available Cash 592,821

	<u>2025 Budget</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>2025 YTD Actuals</u>
Revenues			
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
Total Revenues	1,027,300	-	928,887
Expenses			
Operating Supplies	2,004		298
Professional And Contractual Services	502,448	64,288	317,951
Solid Waste Disposal	7,500	2,256	4,869
Communication And Network Services	576		-
Repairs And Maintenance Services	2,000		455
Consulting Services And Fees	55,150	8,175	45,828
Audit Fees	13,800		12,800
Legal Services	30,000	1,495	11,981
Memberships And Subscriptions	3,000		2,538
Professional Development	13,000	496	7,290
Administrative Fees	125,000		93,750
Promotion And Advertisting	10,000		-
Contribution To General Fund	20,000		-
Community Promotion	114,850	5,000	72,500
Interest Expense - Notes Payable	52,400		-
Total Expenses	951,728	81,710	570,260
Revenues Less Expenses	75,572	(81,710)	358,627

Notes:

Long Term Debt:

Mavcon Agreement	TBD
City of Kalamazoo	1,060,000

Professional And Contractual Services:

	<u>October</u>	<u>2025 YTD Actuals</u>
Recycling Services - BIG BELLY SOLAR LLC	36,068	64,668
Ambassador Services - BLOCK BY BLOCK	28,220	253,984
TOTAL	64,288	318,651

Community Promotion:

Skeletour Spooktacular		
Beats on Bates Events - Sponsorship		50,000
Bee Joyful - Social Media Marketing & Mgt		10,000
Caribbean Festival Sponsorship- Xperience Inc		5,000
2025 Canadiana Fest		2,500
Sounds of the Zoo	5,000	5,000
TOTAL	5,000	72,500

Step-Aside Project Information Request Form

This form must be submitted to the Downtown Economic Growth Authority prior to presenting a project for step-aside consideration. The information provided will be shared with the DEGA Board as a reference during project review and deliberation.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name

Project Address/Location (include parcel ID number)

Description of Project Concept

Visual Aids

Please list and describe below any visual aids attached to this information form (e.g. conceptual site plans, architectural renderings, before/after photographs, or other visual materials)

Total Estimated Investment

Total Plan Length

Estimated Project Start/Completion Date

PROJECT APPROVAL STATUS

Please describe the current stage of approval with relevant departments (e.g., Part 1 application to BRA submitted, site plan approval underway, etc.):

TAXABLE VALUE INFORMATION

Current Taxable Value

Anticipated Taxable Value Upon Project Completion

Estimated DEGA Capture Lost

Assuming a 100% step aside, what is the estimated DEGA capture lost. We can calculate the impact of a partial step aside (e.g., 80-20) from this information.

HOUSING COMPONENT

Is housing a component of the project? Yes No If yes, indicate housing type: Rental Sales

Does the project include affordable housing (if yes, provide details below)? Yes No

Total Number of Units:

Percentage Breakdown: Affordable

Workforce

Market Rate

JOB CREATION

Number of Jobs Created:

Full-time

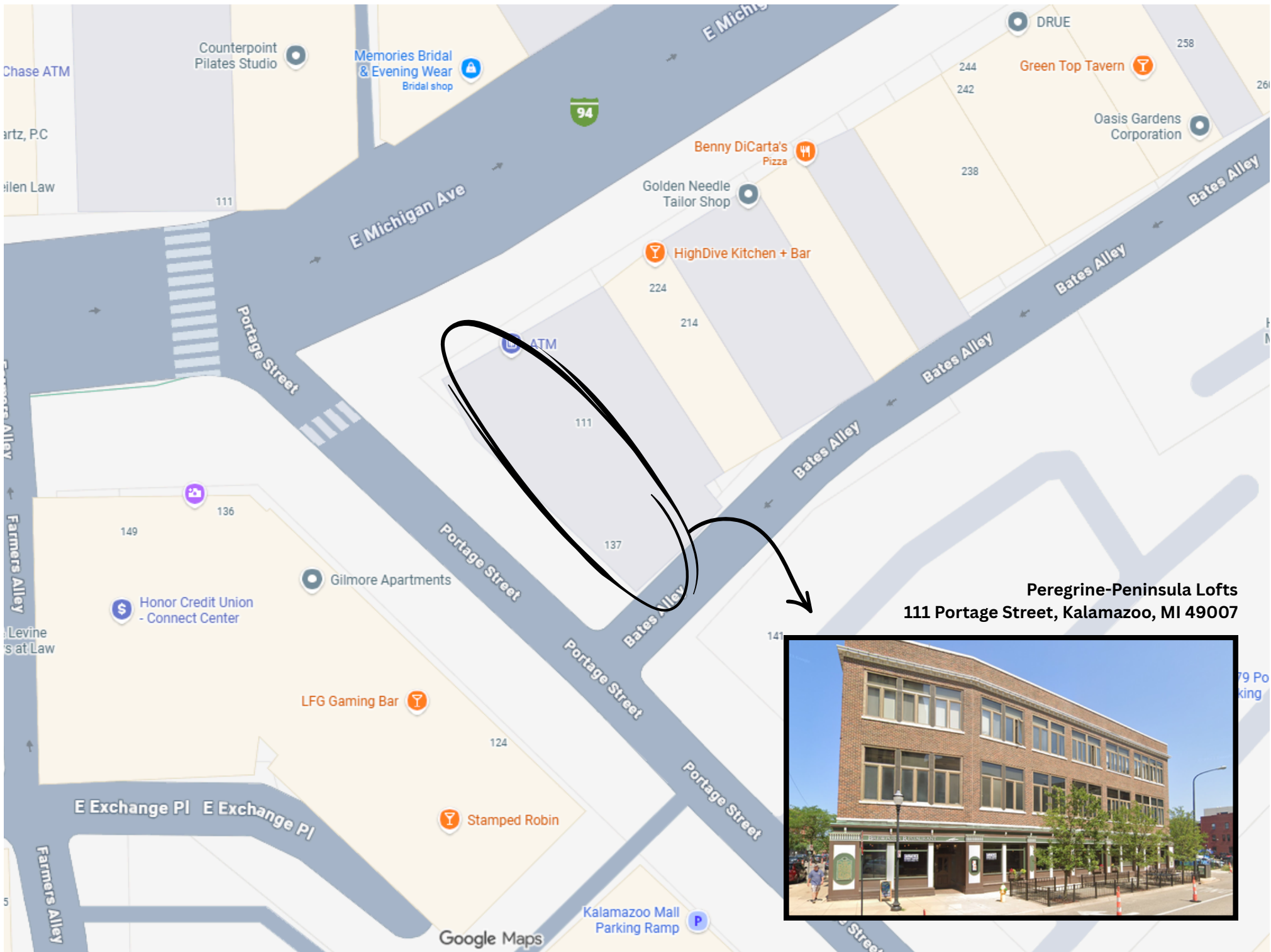
Part-time:

Type of Employment: Permanent Temporary

OTHER INCENTIVES

List any local, state, or federal incentives considered, applied for, or awarded.

Submission Instructions: Completed forms and supporting documents must be submitted to the Downtown Economic Growth Authority at downtown@kalamazoo.org. Submission of this form is required before presenting a step-aside request to the DEGA Board. Developers are expected to reference and discuss the information provided during their project presentation.



Peregrine-Peninsula Lofts
111 Portage Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007





Advertisement



FURNITURE ROW
BLACK FRIDAY SUPER SALE

SAVE \$100

JASPE
~~\$699~~

KALAMAZOO

Brewpub damaged in downtown Kalamazoo fire closed for repairs

Updated: Aug. 30, 2024, 7:21 a.m. | Published: Aug. 30, 2024, 7:20 a.m.



Cyber Sale is ON! \$20 for 6 months. Lowest price of the year.



Fire breaks out at Saugatuck Brewing Company in downtown Kalamazoo



By [Brad Devereaux](#) | bdeverea@mlive.com

KALAMAZOO, MI -- Saugatuck Brewing Company's downtown Kalamazoo location remains closed due to damage that occurred when a fire erupted in the building at 200 E. Michigan Ave. — which houses the brewpub and other spaces.

The fire occurred around 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 24.

Saugatuck Brewing Company, which occupies the first floor of the three-story building, was damaged as firefighters rushed to put out the blaze.

“Though the fire started on the second floor, you can imagine the smoke and water damage that it brought down to the brewpub,” the business posted on Facebook.

“It is hard to say how long the repairs will take, so we will be temporarily closed for the foreseeable future,” the company said. “We look forward to seeing you all again and will continue to update you as we receive information.”

Advertisement





Firefighters responded to a fire at Saugatuck Brewing Company's downtown Kalamazoo location, 200 E Michigan Ave., on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024. (Brad Devereaux | MLive) Brad Devereaux | MLive

Traffic was halted at Portage Street and East Michigan Avenue while firefighters worked at the scene, Saturday.

Advertisement



Firefighters used two ladder trucks to spray water onto the building as smoke poured from the roof and people gathered on nearby sidewalks to watch. The smell of smoke floated through the central part of the city.

KDPS did not released information on the cause of the fire, when asked Thursday.

Saugatuck Brewing opened the Kalamazoo location in April 2023.

The former occupant of the space, Olde Peninsula Brewpub and Restaurant, announced in July 2021 it was closing after 25 years there.

The day of the fire was “unimaginable,” according to the building’s owner, Peregrine Company, which owns several other properties downtown.

“In all of our years, we have never experienced a fire at any of our buildings,” the company said in Facebook post. “All of the residents and tenants are safe and that is the most important part.”

Peregrine thanked KDPS for putting out the fire and thanked others for their support, including a remediation company and the American Red Cross.



Stephanie Ingram, general manager of Saugatuck Brewing Company pours a beer during the brewery's grand-reopening in a new location in downtown Kalamazoo, Michigan on Monday, April 10, 2023. (Joel Bissell | MLive.com) Joel Bissell | MLive.com

Advertisement



Saugatuck Brewing Company couldn't be reached prior to publication for further comment.

Want more Kalamazoo-area news? Bookmark [the local Kalamazoo news page](#) or sign up for the free [3@3 Kalamazoo daily newsletter](#).

Want more Kalamazoo news? Our 3@3 newsletter rounds up Kalamazoo's top stories every weekday at 3 p.m.



Enter your email to get our free newsletter:

Submit



Most Popular Stories by **Brad Devereaux**

Small town power struggle: Mayor sues city manager/police chief, attorney, council

Housing declared a 'public health crisis' by Michigan county

These 3 Michigan teens were traveling in a car when a wrong-way driver ended their lives

New \$1M roundabout coming to Kalamazoo County

Mayor 'deeply saddened' by closure of Southwest Michigan grocery store: 'Buy local'



Brad Devereaux

Brad Devereaux is a reporter in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He worked as a news editor in Lovell, Wyoming, beginning in 2007, and joined MLive in 2011 as a Kalamazoo Gazette intern focusing on public safety. He...more

[✉ BDevereaux@mlive.com](mailto:BDevereaux@mlive.com) [X](#) [f](#)

Around the Web

Neuropathy is not from Low Vitamin B. Meet the Real Enemy of Neuropathy (Stop Doing This)

FootRenew | Sponsored

PULSAR: Intravitreal Aflibercept 8 mg in nAMD – The Doctor's Channel

The Doctor's Channel | Sponsored

These Are The Rolls-Royce Of Hearing Aids (And Under \$100)

Breakthrough hearing tech is helping Americans rediscover clear, natural sound

Soundbright Magazine | Sponsored

Noemi Is Retiring - Her Last Knitted Sweaters Are Up To 70% Off

Noemi Rose has been knitting winter sweaters for decades, but she's finally retiring. Site-wide sale has launched at 70% while stocks last. People are buying 3 - 4 pieces at a time f...

Handcraft Weekly | Sponsored

[Learn More](#)

A Lifetime of Bags, One Final Sale — Up to 50% Off

Junie Boutique | Sponsored

[Learn More](#)

5 Best Practices for Today's Uncertain Market

Has the recent market rollercoaster made you a bit queasy? Here are 5 best practices for your \$750k+ portfolio.

Savant Wealth Management | Sponsored

[Download](#)

Three Major Banks Are Paying Record High Interest Rates - See the List

SavingsPro | Sponsored

[Click Here](#)

Longtime ABC News correspondent dies at 70 following a long illness

MLive.com

Legal hearing could force eviction of Sligh Building in Grand Rapids



▼ About Us

[Contact Us](#)

[Jobs at MLive](#)

[MLive Media Group](#)

[Our Team](#)

[Advertise with us](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)

▼ Subscriptions

[MLive.com](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[The Ann Arbor News](#)

[The Bay City Times](#)

[The Flint Journal](#)

[The Grand Rapids Press](#)

[Jackson Citizen Patriot](#)

[Kalamazoo Gazette](#)

[Muskegon Chronicle](#)

[The Saginaw News](#)

▼ **Already a Subscriber**

[Manage your Subscription](#)

[Place a Vacation Hold](#)

[Make a Payment](#)

[Delivery Feedback](#)

▼ **MLive Sections**

[Jobs](#)

[Autos](#)

[Real Estate](#)

[Rentals](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[News](#)

[Business](#)

[Sports](#)

[Advice](#)

[High School Sports](#)

[Betting](#)

[Life](#)

[Opinion](#)

[Obituaries](#)

▼ **Your Regional News Pages**

[Saginaw](#)

[Jackson](#)

[Kalamazoo](#)

[Muskegon](#)

[Ann Arbor](#)

[Bay City](#)

[Flint](#)

[Grand Rapids](#)

▼ **Mobile**

[Mobile apps](#)

▼ **More on MLive**

[Video](#)

[Weather](#)

[Post a job](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Sell your car](#)

[Sell/Rent your home](#)

[Sponsor Content](#)

[Newspapers.com Archive](#)

▼ **Follow Us**

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[RSS](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [▶ Ad Choices](#)

ADVANCELOCAL

Use of and/or registration on any portion of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#), (updated 8/1/2024) and acknowledgement of our [Privacy Policy](#), and [Your Privacy Choices and Rights](#) (updated 10/1/2025).

© 2025 Advance Local Media LLC. All rights reserved ([About Us](#)).

The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Advance Local.

[Community Rules](#) apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site.

YouTube's privacy policy is available [here](#) and **YouTube's terms of service** is available [here](#).

[▶Ad Choices](#)

DECEMBER 2025 UPDATE

Downtown Kalamazoo

Downtown Kalamazoo: Growing & Glowing This Month

■ **\$1,505**

Downtown Dollars Spent

■ **470 pounds**

Litter Picked Up



Cheers to Alley Cat

Downtown Kalamazoo welcomed a new destination with the grand opening of Alley Cat, a vibrant cocktail bar located at 266 E. Michigan Avenue. The ribbon cutting, held on Dec. 5, marked an exciting addition to the district and a meaningful reinvestment in a long-vacant space.

Alley Cat brings a warm, welcoming atmosphere designed for neighbors, visitors, and friends to gather and connect. With craft cocktails, small plates, and a commitment to showcasing local talent and products, the new bar adds another unique experience to the growing lineup of downtown offerings.

This opening contributes to the strong momentum of new businesses and investments taking root across downtown—further strengthening Kalamazoo’s vibrant and evolving urban core.

Downtown Holiday Lighting Mini-Grant

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

This month, we advanced the Downtown Strategic Plan’s Place with Purpose pillar by launching a new Downtown Holiday Lighting Mini-Grant, created in direct response to business feedback about the need for brighter, more inviting blocks during the winter season. The program emerged from conversations with downtown businesses and a partnership opportunity with the Peregrine-Huff Foundation, whose generous support made the grant possible.

By helping activate areas without existing DEGA-funded light-wrapped trees, the mini-grant brings warmth, visibility, and holiday cheer to some of downtown’s darker spots—enhancing the pedestrian experience and supporting a more vibrant seasonal atmosphere.

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

Completed

Launch Business Newsletter

Completed

Downtown Dollars

In November, Downtown Dollars sales totaled \$845. At the same time, \$1,505 was redeemed at 16 businesses downtown. Year to date, 33 of our 47 participating businesses have redeemed Downtown Dollars.

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
September	14 (28%)	\$285	\$1,485
October	9 (19%)	\$895	\$705
November	16 (34%)	\$845	\$1,505
2025 TOTAL	33 (70%)	\$23,290	\$17,865

Program Life Stats

\$533K
SOLD

\$373K
SPENT

\$130K
IN CIRCULATION

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

COMMITTEE REPORT

Business Recruitment & Retention

- Reconvening in January 2026 to discuss recruitment outreach follow-up, economic vitality study and 2026 workplan.

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.

Survey to downtown businesses and residents/visitors closed in early November.

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**

January 13, 2026 @ 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

Completed

New Ambassador Program contract started Oct. 1, 2025.

- October - December 2025 hours of operation:
 - Sunday & Monday: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday - Thursday: 7 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
 - Friday & Saturday: 7 a.m. - 11 p.m.
- 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!). Awaiting approval of purchase order to move forward with concrete pad installation vendor for handful of remaining units.

Developing plan for disposal of traditional green bins that were removed from the district upon Bigbelly expansion.

Mall Maintenance Agreement Update

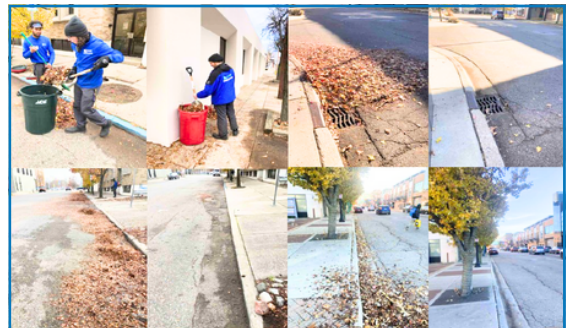
In progress

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 prepared. City will continue contributing at the \$59,210 amount in 2026.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Clean & Green

Reviewed and recommended approval of the Foodservice Packaging Institute MOU before the board Dec. 15.



Ambassador Program

November focused on preparing downtown for winter, including removing bistro sets for off-season repairs and completing extensive leaf collection. Ambassadors also supported the Holiday Parade with pre-event cleaning, on-site coverage, and post-event cleanup. The team collected 3,975 pounds of trash, 1,400 pounds of recycling, and 470 pounds of litter, and removed 13 instances of graffiti, while also providing 23 hospitality assists across the district.

>>> Full November 2025 Report on following pages

Program led by: Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator)

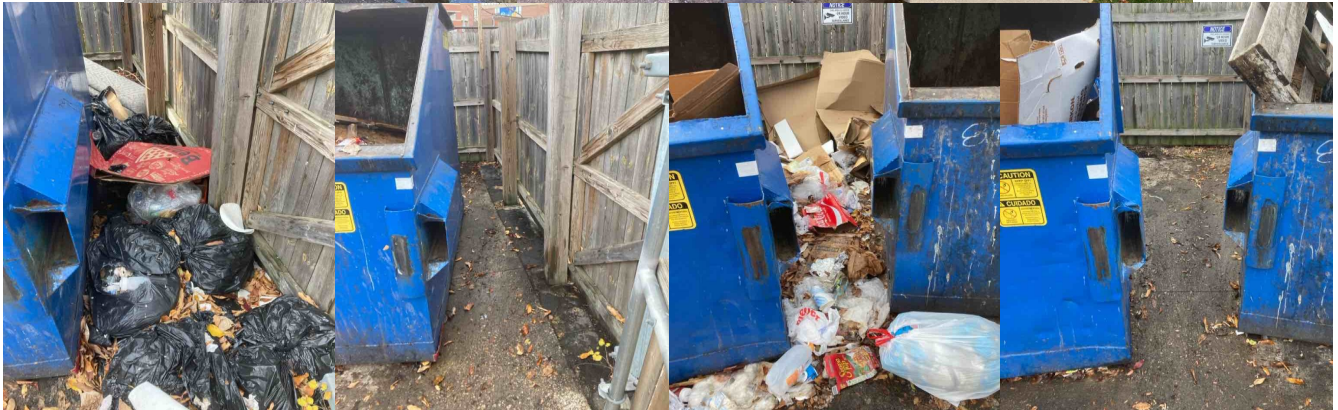
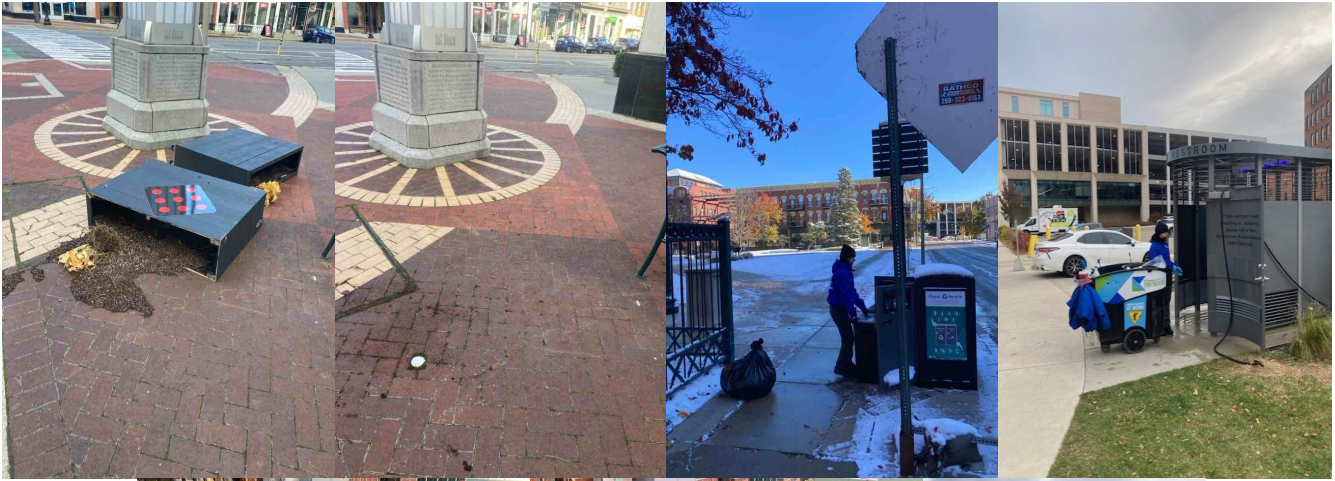


DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO

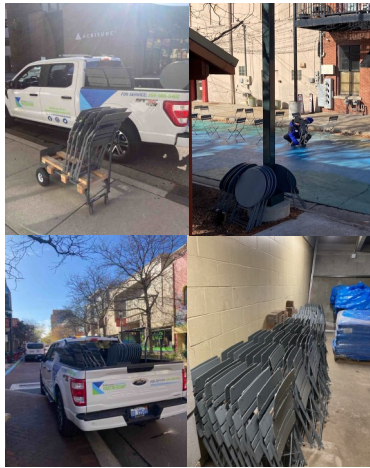
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM NOVEMBER 2025 REPORT



AROUND TOWN IN NOVEMBER

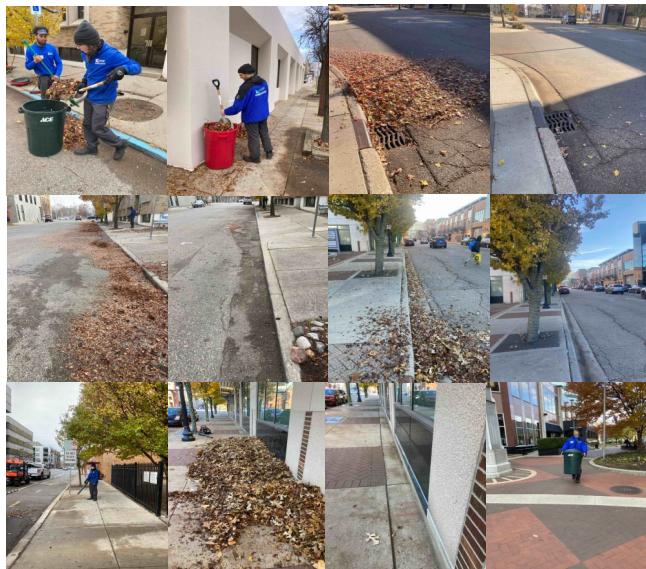


NOVEMBER 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



See You Next Year!

At the beginning of the month the team went through the district and removed the grey bistro sets in preparation for winter. The team will use this time to make necessary repairs and inventory the tables and chairs to be ready for next year.

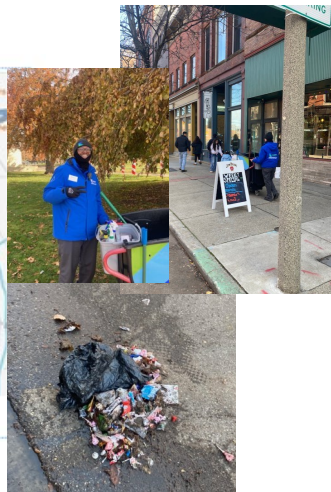


Leaf Collection

As fall continued the team worked extensively on getting leaves collected and taken to the compost.

Holiday Parade

We had a great day for a Parade. The team broke up the parade route for pre cleaning, coverage during the parade and the clean up after the parade. The weather couldn't have been better and turn out looked great.







November 2025 Stats By Zone


	East	Kalamazoo Mall	North	West	Total
CLEANING					
Abandoned Property	31	23	28	12	94
Area Cleaned	9	6	5	5	25
Biohazardous Material	24	14	3	3	44
Restroom Cleaned/Stocked					0
Graffiti - Removed	4	5	1	3	13
Lawn Care (hours)					0
Leaf Removal (hours)	8	26	4	23	61
Power Washing (hours)					0
Snow Removal (hours)	4	4	3		11
Litter (lbs)	290	110	45	25	470
Trash (lbs)	1375	1675	350	575	3975
Recycling (lbs)	300	875	100	125	1400
Flower Watering (gallons)					0
Weed Abatement (block faces)					0
Special Project (hours)	3				3
HOSPITALITY					
Business Contact	1	7			8
Hospitality Assistance	5	7	4	7	23
SAFETY					
Observed Visible Alcohol/Drug Use	1				1
Interaction With Alcohol/Drug Use	1				1
Needles Found	5		1		6
Panhandling - Aggressive		1			1
Panhandling - Passive		1			1
Public Defecation/Urination				1	1
Safety Escorts					0
OUTREACH					
Transient	28	17	5	2	52
Unhoused/Sleeping	25	5	7	5	42
Unsheltered Relocation				2	2

KDP Zone Map


KDP Zones

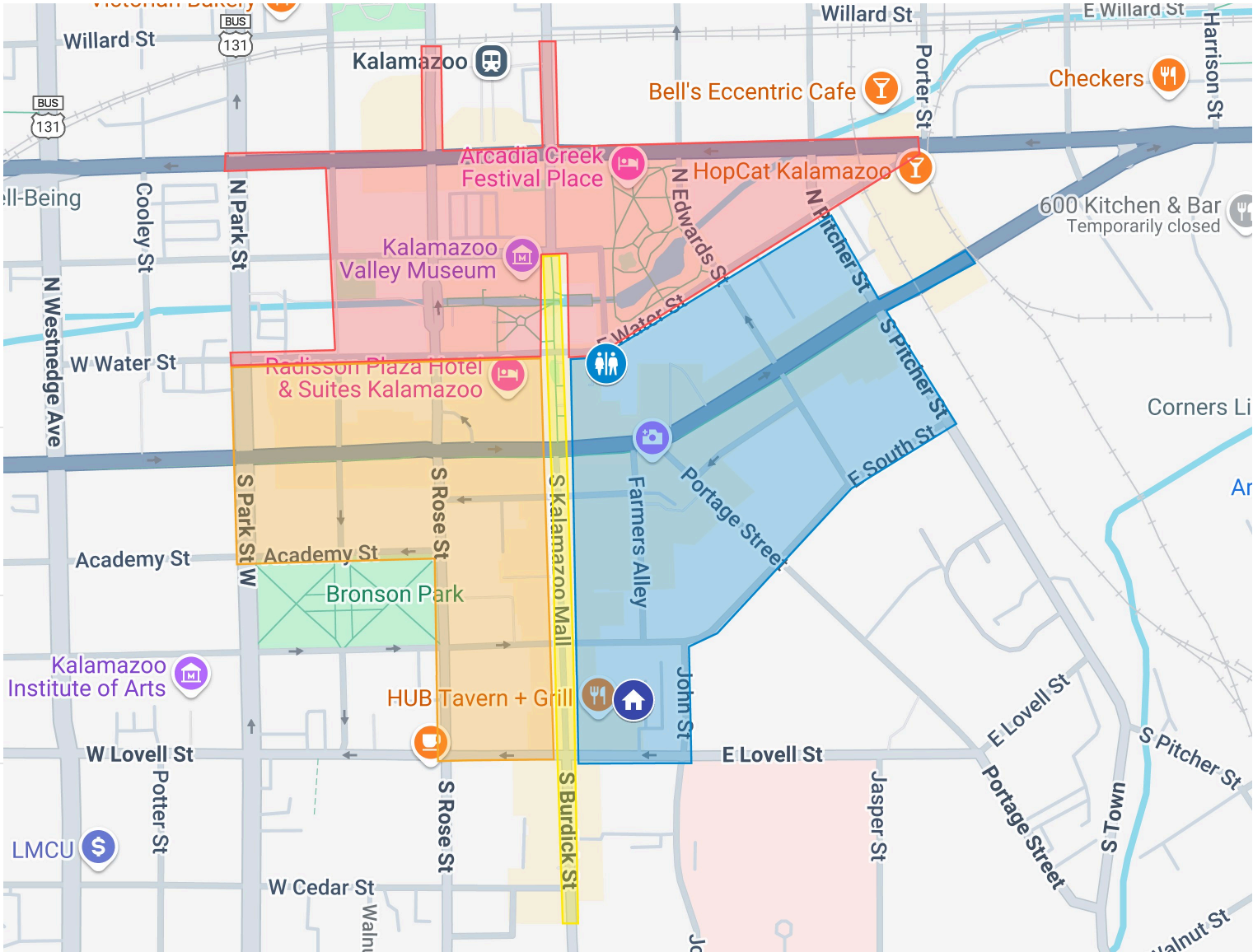
-  Kalamazoo Mall
-  North
-  West
-  East

Restroom

-  Portland Loo

Operations Center

-  Operations Center



2025 STATISTICS

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
CLEANING													
Abandoned Property	119	201	301	433	276	215	241	114	102	119	94		2215
Area Cleaned	27	39	105	43	47	38	40	24	33	26	25		447
Biohazardous Material	36	40	42	56	59	28	30	19	27	40	44		421
Restroom Cleaned/Stocked	23	41	50	55	58	56	63	57	38	49	0		490
Graffiti - Removed	20	31	95	103	53	64	37	51	18	28	13		513
Lawn Care (hours)											0		0
Leaf Removal (hours)	6	4	10		6	3	2	5		22	61		119
Power Washing (hours)				44	51				3		0		98
Snow Removal (hours)	122	38									11		171
Litter (lbs)				1175	575	200	525	350	125	420	470		3840
Trash (lbs)	6800	5775	8425	10200	9225	11325	11275	8400	6335	4925	3975		86660
Recycling (lbs)								575	1500	1375	1400		4850
Flower Watering (gallons)						794		484	396	120	0		1794
Weed Abatement (block faces)				11	10	30	9	4	1		0		65
Special Project (hours)		1	9		30	32			4	6	3		85
HOSPITALITY													
Business Contact	27	41	16	18	4	7	1	3	1	5	8		131
Hospitality Assistance	43	25	41	47	33	59	49	30	21	21	23		392
SAFETY													
Observed Visible Alcohol/Drug Use	11	12	12	41	7	6	7	13	5	2	1		117
Interaction With Alcohol/Drug Use			7	11		6		9	2	0	1		36
Needles Found	5			7	8		7	2	1	4	6		40
Panhandling - Aggressive				1	1			0	1	0	1		4
Panhandling - Passive		1		1	7	1	2	0	0	0	1		13
Public Defecation/Urination	1					1		0	1	3	1		7
Safety Escorts	1	8	1	3			1	1	1	2	0		18
OUTREACH													
Transient	28	24	53	114	144	116	92	53	52	71	52		799
Unhoused/Sleeping	110	94	206	296	157	137	112	84	57	100	42		1395
Unsheltered Relocation	30	9	12	28	4	4	6	7	0	1	2		103

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

- Bates Alley Parklet Policy Committee met in November to discuss potential pathways; consultation with legal and partners continues.

Begin Downtown Design Guidelines Effort

In progress

- Landscape Forms discussion continue on South Kalamazoo Mall existing and future site furnishings



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 second Loo will be installed next to the existing Loo. The Loo was shipped and arrived at City facilities in October 2025. The contract for construction has been awarded, and the planned schedule indicates that the unit will be open and available for use by the end of 2025.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

Bates Alley Parklet Policy

Discussed current state of Bates Alley parklets/decks and options for future direction. Seeking input from legal counsel to inform final recommended strategy to come before the board.



Arcadia Creek Festival Place

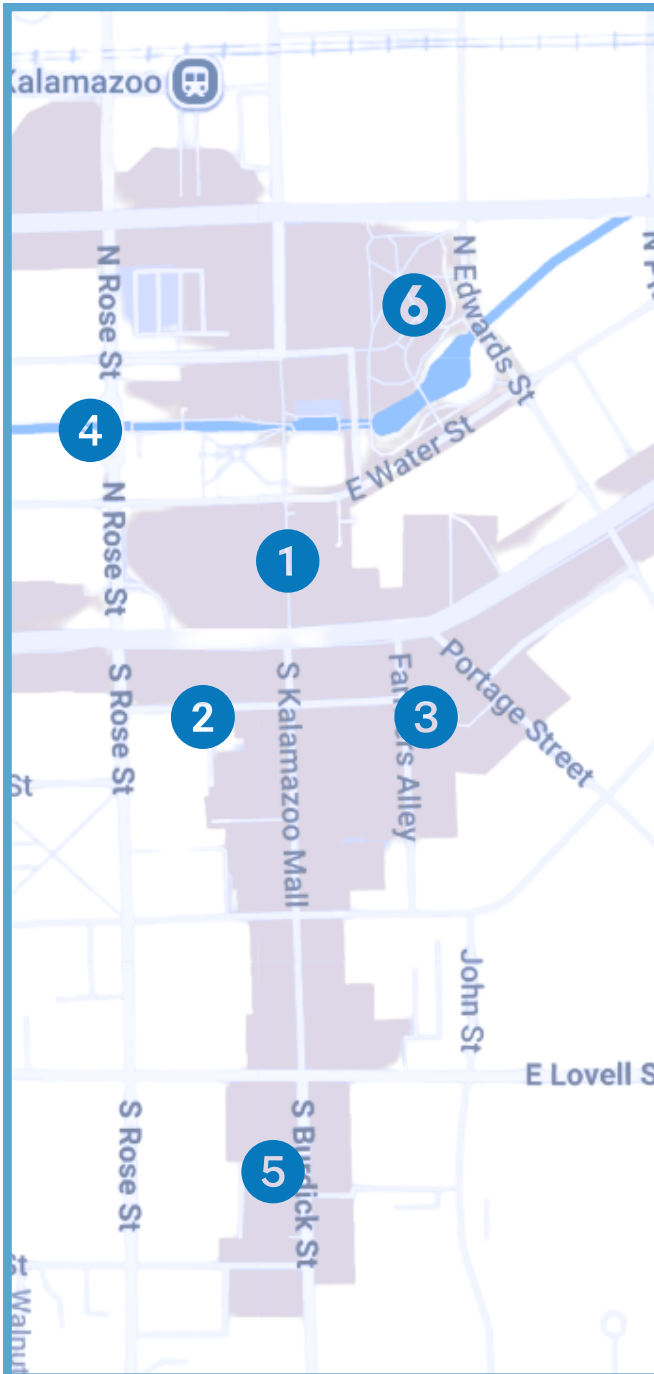
Turning Plans into Place

The City of Kalamazoo is advancing the redesign of Arcadia Creek Festival Place – transforming it into a welcoming, flexible space for year-round community life. The preferred plan, shared at a fall open house and shown above, envisions a park that supports both quiet reflection and large-scale events with improved accessibility, sustainability, and amenities.

Key features include flexible lawns and plazas, event infrastructure, enhanced walkability, and design for all ages and abilities.

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. The \$16 million project includes a \$4.6 million Phase I investment, with \$6 million in pending grants. Design and bidding are underway this fall, with construction anticipated to begin in early 2026 (weather dependent).

The site will be closed down beginning in December 2025.

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

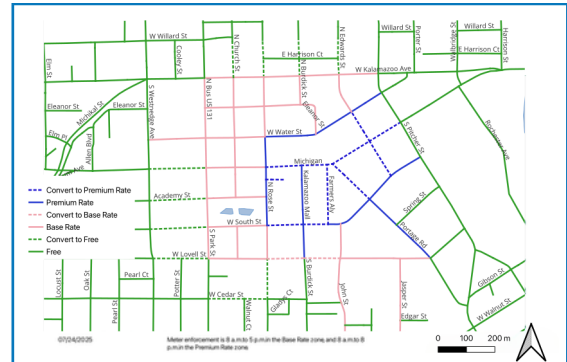
Kalamazoo Streets for All

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 Parking Plan

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, on-street parking changes are rolling out this fall to create a more reliable and flexible system. The changes include replacing outdated meters with kiosks that allow multiple payment options, lowering rates on some blocks, and adding accessible spaces throughout downtown.

Project led by: Christina Anderson (City Planner, Deputy Director of Community Planning and Economic Development) and Rob Bacigalupi (Mission North),

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

Completed

In November, DEGA officially approved the foundational Downtown Kalamazoo place brand. Implementation planning underway.

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 notified of updated process. Next deadline is January 15 for Q2 2026 events.

Access sponsorship packet [here](#).

Downtown Banner Program

In progress

- Banners throughout district mapped; next steps include conversations with City staff on ownership and responsibility of banners.
- Thank you to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation for brightening the first block of the Kalamazoo Mall with holiday banners.

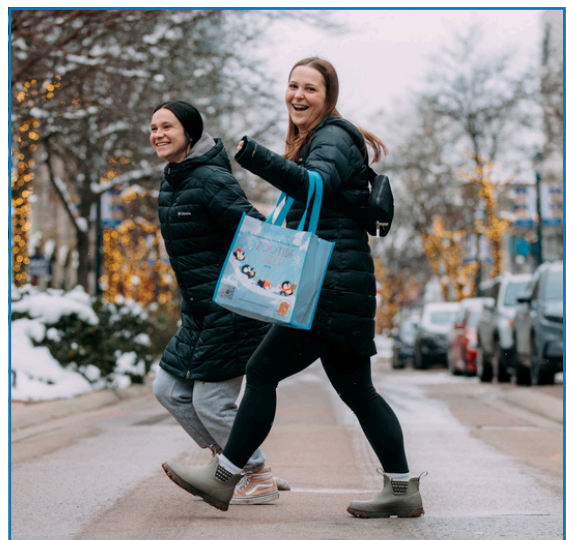
NEWS UPDATE

- [Wheel the World puts Kalamazoo on the map for accessible travel](#)
- [See progress at the Kalamazoo Event Center construction site](#)
- [Alley Cat, Kalamazoo's newest downtown bar, opens in time for biggest bar night of the year](#)

COMMITTEE REPORT

Events & Marketing

- Reviewed Q1 2026 event sponsorship applications



Holiday Events Incoming!

As the days get shorter and the lights get brighter, downtown Kalamazoo still has a season full of cheer, connection, and community ahead.

Santa's Workshop

125 S. Kalamazoo Mall

Thursdays: 5 PM - 8 PM

Fridays: 5 PM - 8 PM

Saturdays: 12 PM - 6 PM

Sundays: 12 PM - 4 PM

Holly Jolly Trolley (Leaves City Hall):

Thursdays and Fridays: 5 PM - 9 PM

Saturdays: 12 PM - 7 PM

Sundays: 12 PM - 4 PM

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

- Discussions with Executive Committee and City staff continue on additional staff to support the work of DDA/DEGA, including job description.

DDA Development Plan

Not started

COMMITTEE REPORT

Executive & Finance

- Reviewed December Board Agenda and Content.
- Discussed upcoming board member vacancies and process for filling vacancies.

To: Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board of Directors

From: Clean and Green Committee

Date: December 15, 2025

Subject: Recommendation to Approve the Foodservice Packaging Institute (FPI) MOU

Overview

The Clean & Green Committee met with representatives from the Foodservice Packaging Institute (FPI) to review the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and discuss the opportunities and expectations associated with joining FPI's food-service packaging recycling initiative. The discussion was robust, with committee members exploring program requirements, communication strategies, and anticipated community impacts.

Following this review, the Clean & Green Committee voted to recommend approval of the attached FPI MOU.

Summary of Agreement

The draft MOU outlines a partnership with FPI to support increased recycling of paper cups and other food-service packaging, as well as expanded public education around accepted recycling materials. Program elements include:

- Adding designated post-consumer food-service packaging materials to the City's recycling program (already in place on City of Kalamazoo webpage).
- Participating in communication and outreach efforts, including website updates, social media messaging, and joint press releases.
- Administering pre- and post-campaign resident awareness surveys, with incentives funded through Downtown Dollars.
- Receiving in-kind support and communication resources valued at approximately \$20,000 from FPI.

See attached draft MOU for full terms.

Legal Review

The attached agreement is provided to the Board in draft form. DEGA's legal counsel will conduct a full review. If any significant changes are recommended through that process, the revised MOU will be brought back before the Board for additional consideration and approval before execution.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the DEGA Board of Directors approve the attached draft Memorandum of Understanding with the Foodservice Packaging Institute, pending legal review, and authorize the Board Chair to sign the agreement.

Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is entered into this ___ day of ____, 2025 by the City of Kalamazoo (hereinafter referred to as “Partner”) and the Foodservice Packaging Institute (“FPI”) for the sole purpose of increasing recycling of paper cups and other foodservice packaging and working together to better educate the general public regarding what types of materials may be included for recycling.

Key Program information

- Households served: 34,900 (City of Kalamazoo)
- Recycling Program Participation: Unknown
- Materials Recovery Facility (MRF): Waste Connections, Elkhart IN

Program Additions

- Partner shall add the following Post-Consumer FSP materials to its recycling program within 60 days.
- The Community Partner will highlight already accepted FSP through the continued promotion of their accepted material list (check all that apply):

Item	Added material	Included material	Not accepted
Paper cups		X	
Paper bags		X	
Pizza boxes			X
Molded fiber food packaging (carriers/containers/egg cartons)		X	
PET cups		X	
PET clamshells/containers/trays		X	
Polypropylene (PP) cups		X	
Polypropylene (PP) tubs/containers/tray		X	
Rigid polystyrene (PS) cups		X	
Rigid polystyrene (PS) clamshells/containers		X	
Aluminum foil food packaging (containers/pans/trays)		X	

Communications Measures

- Increase in website clicks on the program’s recycling web page.
 - Multiple web pages
- Increase social media traffic for posts regarding foodservice packaging additions.
- Sustain web traffic through two-month campaign.
- Increase residential awareness around the recyclability of acceptable foodservice packaging items by 8% through a pre- and post-campaign online survey.

Preparation Considerations

- Partner will run analytics report on current recycling webpage traffic and social media engagements to understand baseline.
- Where appropriate, use FPI community partner resources (photos, terminology, messaging best practices, design templates, recycling, and communications advisory services) or update current material to reflect accepted FSP.

Communication Planning and Tactics

Upon execution of the MOU, Partner commits to engaging in various outreach methods leading up to the announcement of the acceptance of additional foodservice packaging to residential audiences in each of the communities it serves. Partner currently manages collection of recyclables for the following communities:

- City of Kalamazoo

Mandatory tactics:

- Update to program website with hot and cold paper cups and any other FSP items checked above (*FPI to provide sample content and image data base of foodservice packaging that Partner can use*)
- Disseminate campaign messaging about FSP weekly during two-month campaign.
- Release a joint press release with FPI regarding FSP recycling.
- Participate in a refresh campaign six months after the initial campaign launch to maintain residents' good recycling habits.
- Distribute residential awareness survey link provided by FPI to residents before the campaign launch and again during the refresh campaign. Survey gift card incentives to be paid for using City of Kalamazoo Downtown Dollars.

Additional tactics:

Specific communication tactics will be identified during a subsequent planning call and will be documented in a comprehensive communications plan, complete with a campaign timeline. These tactics will be tailored to meet the unique requirements and preferences of served communities.

Community Partnership Grant Package:

Note: These estimates are based on using established FPI templates and may change on design needs.

Campaign Element	Cost
Campaign Support	
• RRS campaign preparation (labor and in-kind support)	\$3,000
• Big belly signage	\$9,000
• Customized graphics promoting FSP recycling	\$2,000
• Pre-campaign survey with incentives	\$1,000
Advertising Support	
• Printed flyers	\$1,000
• Point-of-purchase materials (e.g., window decals)	\$1,000
• Digital, print, and/or outdoor advertising or similar media	\$2,000
Refresh Campaign	

Foodservice Packaging Institute (FPI) Memorandum of Understanding

• Post-campaign survey with incentives	\$1,000
Total In-kind and advertising:	\$20,000

In-kind Outreach Campaign Support

With the understanding that this partnership is a collaboration to educate residents within communities and areas managed by Partner, FPI can support Partner communication efforts through the identified tactics with in-kind assistance and communication resources valued at approximately \$20,000. Any educational materials sent out or provided by Partner on behalf of FPI, including those distributed electronically, will need to be reviewed and approved by FPI prior to use.

Confidentiality of Grant Amount

The Partner acknowledges that the funding amount awarded under this agreement is determined based on a range of factors, including but not limited to estimated household reach, regional strategic considerations, and programmatic scope. In order to preserve the integrity and flexibility of the funding model across multiple partnerships, the funding amount specified herein shall be treated as confidential and shall not be disclosed publicly or shared with third parties, including other current or prospective community partners, without prior written consent from FPI.

Term of Agreement

This MOU will expire one year after the start date, at which time it will be again subject to review, renewal or expiration. If the Partner and FPI mutually agree to continue cooperation, a new agreement shall be executed.

Natha Dempsey, President
Foodservice Packaging Institute

Curt Aardema, Chairperson
Downtown Economic Growth Authority