

Agenda

Downtown Economic Growth Authority

Board of Directors



City of Kalamazoo

Monday, April 20, 2026

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 March 16, 2026(**Action: Motion to approve**)

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report - February 2026 (**Action: Motion to accept the February 2026 Downtown Economic Growth Authority financial statement**)
2. Presentation: Institute for Public Scholarship (Michelle Johnson)

3. Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 - Downtown Engagement (Christina Anderson)
4. Downtown Report

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

- 1.
2. **Committee Governance Model (Action: Motion to adopt the Committee Governance Policy, including the establishment of a committee application process and Executive Committee recommendation framework for committee membership, and to establish the committee structure as presented.)**
3. **Committee Membership Recommendations (Action: Motion to approve the committee membership recommendations as presented)**
4. **Bates Alley Parklet Recommendation (Action: Motion to authorize the Downtown Economic Growth Authority to enter a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Kalamazoo to complete one-time repairs to the Bates Alley parklets, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000, and to formally exit any future ownership, maintenance, or operational responsibilities upon completion of those repairs.)**
5. **Landscape Forms South Kalamazoo Mall Proposal (Action: Motion to approve acceptance of an in-kind donation of site furnishings from Landscape Forms, valued at up to \$100,000, for installation on the South Kalamazoo Mall; to authorize the Placemaking Committee to finalize product specifications, installation locations, and installation approach; and to authorize the Board Chair to execute any necessary documentation, in consultation with legal counsel, to implement the project, with any decisions carrying budget implications to be brought back to the Board for approval.)**
6. Downtown Kalamazoo Website

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

H. ADJOURNMENT

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026, 3 p.m. | City Hall, 241 W. South Street

PRESENT: Curt Aardema, Mayor David Anderson, Jeff Breneman (virtual), Trisha Kidd,
Rick Searing, Cheng Kidd Sun, Jessica Thompson

ABSENT: Clarence Lloyd, Stanley Steppes

STAFF: Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator), Maria Smith (Community Investment Administrative Assistant), Bobby Boyd (Economic Development Supervisor)

A. CALL TO ORDER

DIRECTOR AARDEMA CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:02 P.M.

PRESENT: Curt Aardema, Mayor David Anderson, Jeff Breneman (virtual), Trisha Kidd, Rick Searing, Cheng Kidd Sun, Jessica Thompson

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Clarence Lloyd, Stanley Steppes

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: None

THE MARCH 16, 2026, ATTENDANCE, INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, IS RECORDED.

1. Purpose Statement:

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Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026, 3 p.m. | City Hall, 241 W. South Street

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

Director Aardema made a recommendation to amend the agenda to add item D.2, the Downtown Report.

DIRECTOR KIDD SUN MOTIONED TO ADOPT THE MARCH 16, 2026, DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY AGENDA AS AMENDED. DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 16, 2026, DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY MEETING. DIRECTOR KIDD SUN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report – January 2026 (Meghan Behymer, Downtown Coordinator)

Behymer reviewed the January 2026 financial report: In January, the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) received no revenue. 2026 year-to-date revenues total \$0. In January, DEGA had no expenditures. 2026 year-to-date expenditures total \$0.

DIRECTOR SEARING MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 2026 DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY FINANCIAL REPORT. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Downtown Report – March 2026

Behymer reviewed the Downtown Report and gave updates including the Match on Main grant program which has opened applications and the City may submit up to two businesses. The deadline is March 27 with the selection announcement on April 10. The MEDC application is due April 20 and business selection is in July.

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026, 3 p.m. | City Hall, 241 W. South Street

The Economic Development Division Salesforce Database is being updated to ensure there are accurate business contacts for communication ahead of upcoming construction projects.

Behymer detailed that the Downtown Dollars program had over \$3,000 purchased and \$2,300 redeemed at 11 Downtown businesses in February. The boost was driven by Downtown Dollars purchased for attendees of a downtown conference. The Bigbelly sponsorship program is being developed by the Events & Marketing Committee while the Food Service Packaging MOU is being finalized.

Behymer has been holding Downtown Maintenance meetings with several City departments to identify key focus areas. The February meeting with Public Services and Parks and Recreation focused on Kalamazoo Mall and Bates alley spring beautification including brick repairs planned in July, bridge inspections, and repair or replacement of road closure planters.

Behymer explained that the Ambassadors participated in cleanup from vandalism damage and conducted outreach to the affected businesses. The Board sent letters of acknowledgement to the affected businesses. There has been interest expressed in expanding the Ambassador's service areas.

Behymer will be meeting next week regarding downtown design guidelines specifically focused on South Kalamazoo Mall site furnishing concepts.

Behymer shared a major update regarding the Arcadia Creek Festival Place construction timeline which has been adjusted to allow up to four festivals in 2026. The goal is to minimize disruption by reducing the events closure from two summers to one summer. There is ongoing coordination with event organizers and the City, while media communications are being driven by the City Manager's office.

The Clean and Green Committee is developing the wayfinding draft RFP with a timeline and goals being defined at the upcoming meeting. Kalamazoo Ave roadwork is expected to start post July 4. The communication outreach strategy is targeting those who are affected daily, downtown businesses, and the public.

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026, 3 p.m. | City Hall, 241 W. South Street

Behymer's other major updates about Downtown included installation of parking kiosks this week, and activation of the system on April 1 with a 2-week grace period. There will be accessibility improvements and a promotional campaign. The Board expressed concerns about the low visibility of the meters at the curb which could cause damaged car doors.

Events & Marketing Committee has approved \$18,500 in sponsorship support, being awarded for 6 events. There is a \$1,000 sponsorship tier available for applications received after the deadline. Beats on Bates returns June 3 with the new Downtown branding incorporated into the logo.

Behymer expressed that one of her top priorities is hiring the Downtown Support position.

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Arts Council contribution to Beats on Bates

DIRECTOR SEARING MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT A \$1500 CONTRIBUTION FROM THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREATER KALAMAZOO TO SUPPORT BEATS ON BATES PROGRAMMING. SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR KIDD SUN. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.

2. Beats on Bates Agreement Amendment

DIRECTOR SEARING MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE 2026 BEATS ON BATES AGREEMENT WITH GUESS WHO'S DANCING FITNESS TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT AMOUNT BY \$1500 TO SUPPORT MARKETING OF THE BEATS ON BATES PROGRAMMING, BRINGING THE TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT TO \$51,500. SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR KIDD SUN. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.

3. Budget Amendment

MAYOR ANDERSON MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE DEGA BUDGET TO RECOGNIZE \$50,000 IN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM FUNDING FROM THE

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026, 3 p.m. | City Hall, 241 W. South Street

IRVING S. GILMORE FOUNDATION AND \$1500 IN BEATS ON BATES MARKETING SUPPORT FROM THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREATER KALAMAZOO, AND TO AUTHORIZE A \$1500 EXPENDITURE INCREASE TO THE BEATS ON BATES AGREEMENT WITH GUESS WHO'S DANCING FITNESS AND A \$6500 EXPENDITURE INCREASE FOR CONCRETE PAD POURING WITH EARLEY AND ASSOCIATES. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.

- 4. Motion to amend 2026 beats on bates agreement with Guess Who's Dancing Fitness \$5,000 total \$56,500.**

MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO AMEND THE 2026 BEATS ON BATES AGREEMENT WITH GUESS WHO'S DANCING FITNESS TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT AMOUNT BY \$5,000 TO SUPPORT MARKETING OF THE BEATS ON BATES PROGRAMMING, BRINGING THE TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT TO \$56,500. DIRECTOR KIDD SUN SECONDED. DIRECTOR THOMPSON ABSTAINED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

- 5. 2026-2027 Slate of Officers**

The Executive Committee recommends the following slate of officers for the 2026–2027 term:

- Chair: Curt Aardema
- Vice-Chair: Clarence Lloyd
- Treasurer: Rick Searing
- Secretary: Trisha Kidd

MAYOR ANDERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE SLATE OF OFFICERS. SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR THOMPSON. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.

- 6. 2026-2027 Committees**

MAYOR ANDERSON MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE 2026-2027 COMMITTEES AS AMENDED, ADDING HARVIN AND APPOINTING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS AND MEMBERS AS

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026, 3 p.m. | City Hall, 241 W. South Street

**PRESENTED. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS.
MOTION APPROVED.**

7. City of Kalamazoo Request for Letter of Commitment

MAYOR ANDERSON MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD CHAIR TO SIGN A LETTER OF COMMITMENT INDICATING THAT DEGA'S INTENT IS TO PROVIDE UP TO \$78,640 AS A LOCAL MATCH FOR PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE REPAIRS ALONG ARCADIA PROMENADE AS PART OF THE CITY OF KALAMAZOO'S CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING GRANT APPLICATION, CONTINGENT UPON THE GRANT BEING AWARDED, WITH THE CONTRIBUTION ANTICIPATED TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE 2027 DEGA BUDGET. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

None.

H. ADJOURNMENT

DIRECTOR SEARING MOTIONED TO ADJOURN, SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR KIDD SUN. MOTION APPROVED WITH NOONE OPPOSED.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 P.M.

**Downtown Economic Growth Authority
February 2026 Financial Summary**

In February, the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) received \$59,210 in revenue from Contributions from City of Kalamazoo related to Mall Maintenance. 2026 year-to-date revenues total \$59,210.

In February, DEGA expenditures totaled \$49,527. Key expense categories included: **Professional and Contractual Services (\$35,500)** for Block by Block Ambassador Program Services; **Consulting Services and Fees (\$8,925)** for a5 Branding & Digital agreement; **Promotion and Advertising (\$2,677)** for Brand launch materials; and **Community Promotion (\$2,475)** for brand launch event. 2026 year-to-date expenditures total \$49,527.

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
Big Belly Solar	Bigbelly Waste & Recycling	December 2021 – May 15, 2028
Block by Block	Ambassador Program Agreement	October 2025 – Sept. 2028
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 2026 – Dec. 2026

Downtown Economic Growth Authority
Statement of Activity
2/28/2026

Total Available Cash 474,039

	<u>2026 Budget</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>2026 YTD Actuals</u>
Revenues			
Taxes	1,126,558		-
Other Revenue			-
Contributions from COK	59,210	59,210	59,210
Contributions from Solid Waste Fund	32,000		-
Contributions from Grants			-
Total Revenues	<u><u>1,217,768</u></u>	<u><u>59,210</u></u>	<u><u>59,210</u></u>
Expenses			
Operating Supplies			-
Professional And Contractual Services	544,000	35,500	35,500
Solid Waste Disposal	8,500		-
Communication And Network Services	600		-
Repairs And Maintenance Services	24,000		-
Consulting Services And Fees	27,166	8,925	8,925
Audit Fees	13,400		-
Legal Services	30,000		-
Memberships And Subscriptions	2,500		-
Professional Development	7,000		-
Payroll	80,000		-
Administrative Fees	187,500		-
Promotion And Advertisting	65,000	2,627	2,627
Contribution To General Fund	30,000		-
Contribution To DDA	52,374		-
Community Promotion	165,000	2,475	2,475
Notes Payable - Principle	92,667		-
Notes Payable Interest	41,266		-
Total Expenses	<u><u>1,370,973</u></u>	<u><u>49,527</u></u>	<u><u>49,527</u></u>
Revenues Less Expenses	<u><u>(153,205)</u></u>	<u><u>9,683</u></u>	<u><u>9,683</u></u>

Notes:

	<u>Agreement Amount</u>	<u>Payments Made*</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Long Term Debt:			
Mavcon Agreement	483,000	45,129	437,871
City of Kalamazoo	1,060,000	-	1,060,000

**Will include all payments to show decreasing balance*

	<u>February</u>	<u>2026 YTD Actuals</u>
Professional And Contractual Services:		
Recycling Services - BIG BELLY SOLAR LLC		-
Ambassador Services - BLOCK BY BLOCK	35,500	35,500
TOTAL	<u><u>35,500</u></u>	<u><u>35,500</u></u>

	<u>February</u>	<u>2026 YTD Actuals</u>
Community Promotion:		
Beats on Bates Events - Sponsorship	2,475	2,475
TOTAL	<u><u>2,475</u></u>	<u><u>2,475</u></u>

IMAGINE KALAMAZOO 2035

DESIGN IT! DOWNTOWN

A week of events to explore, experience, and shape what's next for Downtown!

April 28 - May 4

TUE
APR
28

Plans to Place Open House

This event is your chance to see what projects are coming next in Downtown Kalamazoo!
»Catalyst Center, 180 Water St | 5 - 7 pm

WED
APR
29

First 16 Feet with Yard & Co. *

An interactive workshop with Yard & Co. on strengthening Downtown through the lens of the First 16 Feet of public space, including a walking tour.
»Intersect Studio, Exchange Building
155 W Michigan Ave Ste 1508 | 3 - 6 pm

THU
APR
30

Downtown Business Breakfast

A discussion with the downtown business community on issues, opportunities, and parking, including a presentation by Yard & Co. strategies for storefronts, activation, and programming.
»Stakeholder meeting by invitation | 8- 1030 am

THU
APR
30

Walking Audit *

Navigate downtown through scenarios like meeting friends or running errands, while identifying opportunities for better wayfinding and navigation. Meet at Caffe Casa afterwards for free coffee!
»Meet at South St & Farmers Alley | 12 - 1 pm

THU
APR
30

Downtown "Stickiness" Panel

A social gathering and discussion focused on how to attract and retain young professionals, with LINK Kalamazoo, Yard & Co., Greenleaf Hospitality, and Kalamazoo College.
»KNAC, 315 W Michigan Ave | 5 - 7:30 pm

FRI
MAY
1

Using Data to Understand Downtown *

What can data tell us about the future of downtown? Join Jane Ghosh, CEO of Discover Kalamazoo, to explore how cities are using data to strengthen downtowns. Lunch will be provided.
»Catalyst Center, 180 Water St | 11 am - 12:30 pm

FRI
MAY
1

Walking Scavenger Hunt *

Document your experience as you find locations and landmarks in Downtown Kalamazoo, ending at Spirit of Kalamazoo for free ice cream!
»Meet at Michigan Ave & Rose St | 4 - 5 pm

FRI
MAY
1

Design It! Downtown Meeting

Stop by during Art Hop and share your ideas and priorities for Downtown Kalamazoo
»City Centre, 125 S Kalamazoo Mall | 5 - 8 pm

MON
MAY
4

Arts & Culture Panel Discussion

A panel discussion on the role of arts and culture in creating a vibrant downtown, moderated by Troy Thrash, CEO of the Air Zoo. Organized by Crawlspace Comedy Theatre.
»KNAC, 315 W Michigan Ave | 3 - 5 pm

Find full event details and RSVP:

KalamazooCity.org/IK2035



* **RSVP REQUESTED** * **RSVP REQUIRED**
KalamazooCity.org/RSVP

Imagine
Kalamazoo
2035



**CITY OF KALAMAZOO DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (“DDA”) AND
DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY (“DEGA”)
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

Name: _____

1. Please list any **Financial Interest** or **Duality of Interest** (as defined in the DDA and DEGA Conflict of Interest Policy) that you, any Family Member or any Related Entity has with the DDA or DEGA:

Person with Financial Interest	Describe Financial Interest

Person with Duality of Interest	Describe Duality of Interest

2. List any organization or business entity (profit or nonprofit) in which you or a Family Member currently serve as a director or officer, receive compensation or hold a position that may make it likely that you will interact with the DDA or DEGA.

Business/Organization	Position/Involvement	Person Involved (Relationship)

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3. List any other organization, involvement, relationship, conditions or circumstances that place you, or **may** place you, in a conflict or potential conflict with the DDA or DEGA.

Organization or Circumstance	Conflict or Potential Conflict

4. If employed, please identify the following:

Individual	Place of Employment	Principal Business Activity
Person completing form:		

The undersigned deposes and says that: (1) she/he has fully and to the best of his/her ability completed this Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement, and (2) that he/she will *update this Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement if and when relevant circumstances change*. The undersigned further recognizes that DDA and DEGA is a governmental organization that is tax exempt and it must engage in public tax-exempt purposes. The undersigned agrees that it is important to disclose conflicts of interest. The undersigned acknowledges that she/he has received and read a copy of the DDA and DEGA Conflict of Interest Policy and understands the Policy and agrees to comply with it.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Print Name)

4898-9883-7908 v1 [88592-1]

Committee Governance Structure and Policy Adoption

Purpose

To establish a formal committee governance structure and policy that strengthens effectiveness, aligns with the Strategic Plan, and maximizes the use of board and community expertise.

Background

As the DDA/DEGA advances an increasing number of strategic initiatives, committees play a critical role in developing and refining work for Board consideration. Committee structure and expectations have historically been informal. With recent leadership transitions and a shift toward a more committee-driven model, a clear and consistent framework is needed. This effort also aligns with bylaws requiring annual establishment of committees and memberships.

Proposed Committee Governance Model

Committee Structure

The following standing committees currently exist and per bylaws are to be renewed annually:

- Executive Committee
- Business Recruitment & Retention Committee
- Events & Marketing Committee
- Placemaking Committee

The Executive Committee will serve as a coordinating body to ensure alignment across committees and elevate recommendations to the Board.

Membership Composition (Updated)

- Each committee will consist of up to 8 members
- No more than 4 Board Members per committee
- Up to 4 non-board (external) members

Committees are not required to fill all seats but should maintain a balance between board leadership and external expertise.

Committee Application and Appointment Process

A formal application process will be established for all non-board members, mirroring the Board application to ensure a consistent and transparent approach.

- Interested individuals will submit a committee application
- Recommendations for committee membership may originate from staff, committee leadership, or the committees themselves
- All proposed committee memberships (board and non-board) will be reviewed by the Executive Committee
- The Executive Committee will make final recommendations to the Board for approval

Terms and Appointments

- Board members assigned annually
- External members serve two-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms
- Committees and memberships approved annually by the Board
- Membership recommendations may flow through committees, staff, or leadership, with final recommendation authority resting with the Executive Committee prior to Board approval

Standardized Staggered Terms (Non-Board Members)

To ensure continuity and consistency across all committees:

- Each committee may include up to four external members
- Approximately two members will rotate annually

Initial appointments will include a mix of one- and two-year terms to establish this structure. All subsequent appointments will be for two-year terms.

This approach ensures continuity of knowledge and experience, predictable annual rotation, and opportunities for new participation.

Committee Membership & Staggered Terms (2026)

	Business Recruitment and Retention	Events and Marketing	Placemaking
Board #1 (Chair)	Clarence Lloyd	Trisha Kidd	Rick Searing
Board #2	Harvin Sandhu	Cheng Kidd Sun	Curt Aardema
Board #3	Connor Sampson	Stanley Steppes	Harvin Sandhu
Board #4	Cheng Kidd Sun	-----	-----
External #1	2028 term end	2028 term end	2028 term end
External #2	2028 term end	2028 term end	2028 term end
External #3	2027 term end	2027 term end	2027 term end

External #4	2027 term end	2027 term end	2027 term end
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Note: Board members are appointed annually and do not have committee term limits. External members serve staggered terms.

Roles and Expectations

Committee members are expected to:

- Attend at least 75% of meetings
- Review materials in advance
- Actively participate in discussion
- Contribute to advancing committee priorities

Chairs will:

- Set agendas with staff
- Facilitate meetings
- Report to the Executive Committee and Board

Committees provide recommendations; final action rests with the Board unless otherwise authorized.

Recommended Action

Motion to adopt the Committee Governance Policy, including the establishment of a committee application process and Executive Committee recommendation framework for committee membership, and to establish the committee structure as presented.

Commented [MB1]: Application for committee members flow to Executive Committee;



Downtown Economic Growth Authority Staff Report

City of Kalamazoo

TO: The Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board of Directors

FROM: Antonio Mitchell, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development

DATE: April 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Committee Membership Recommendations (**Action: Motion to approve the committee membership recommendations as presented**)

SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND:

RECOMMENDATION:

MEMORANDUM

To: Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) Board

From: Placemaking Committee

Date: April 20, 2026

Re: Bates Alley Parklets – Recommendation for One-Time Repairs and Future Strategy

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to present the Placemaking Committee’s recommendation regarding the Bates Alley parklets following its assumption of the former ad hoc Parklet Committee role in March 2026.

Background

The Bates Alley parklets were previously governed by agreements that are no longer in effect, resulting in unclear ownership and responsibility for maintenance and repairs. Based on review and discussion, the parklets are likely considered City property located within the public right-of-way.

The DDA has previously authorized up to \$9,000 in repairs to address current safety concerns. However, in the absence of a formal agreement defining roles, authority, and responsibility, continued involvement by the DDA presents potential legal, financial, and operational risks.

It is also important to note that beginning in 2026, Bates Alley maintenance funding was formally removed from the DDA budget and incorporated into the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) budget, where such expenses are allowable under the DEGA Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan. This shift reflects an intentional move away from ongoing DDA responsibility for maintenance of the space.

Committee Discussion & Options Considered

The Placemaking Committee considered several potential pathways to address both the immediate safety concerns and the long-term structure of the parklets. Re-establishing a license agreement and associated business leases would provide clarity of authority but would require the DDA to re-engage in ongoing program management, administration, and enforcement—an approach that does not align with the current direction of the organization. Similarly, a tri-party agreement between the City, DDA, and adjacent property owners was explored as a way to define shared responsibilities; however, this option would be complex to negotiate and difficult to enforce, while still exposing the DDA to risk if maintenance responsibilities are not consistently upheld.

The Committee also considered taking no action. While this would eliminate immediate DDA involvement, it would leave known safety concerns unaddressed and maintain the current ambiguity around responsibility. Given the prior authorization of repair funding and the condition of the structures, this option was not considered viable.

Recommendation: Perform One-Time Repairs and Exit

The Placemaking Committee recommends the Downtown Economic Growth Authority :

1. Enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Kalamazoo authorizing the DEGA to complete the previously approved repairs (not to exceed \$10,000); and
2. Upon completion of repairs, formally withdraw from any ongoing ownership, maintenance, or operational responsibilities related to the Bates Alley parklets.

Rationale

This approach represents the most balanced and risk-conscious path forward by allowing the DEGA to address immediate safety concerns in a timely and responsible manner while establishing clear authority through coordination with the City. It limits long-term liability exposure and aligns with the 2026 budget structure, which intentionally transitions ongoing maintenance responsibility away from DDA and DEGA.

At the same time, it avoids the need for continued operational or administrative involvement and provides a clear transition point for future ownership and management. Following repair, the parklets would be positioned to operate under the City's Outdoor Dining Guidelines, with the understanding that targeted revisions may be necessary to accommodate the unique configuration of the Bates Alley decks. This creates a more consistent and unified framework for outdoor dining across downtown moving forward.

Proposed Board Action

Motion to authorize the Downtown Economic Growth Authority to enter a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Kalamazoo to complete one-time repairs to the Bates Alley parklets, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000, and to formally exit any future ownership, maintenance, or operational responsibilities upon completion of those repairs.

MEMORANDUM

To: Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) Board

From: Placemaking Committee

Date: April 20, 2026

Re: Acceptance of In-Kind Donation and Authorization – Landscape Forms Placemaking Installation

Purpose

To seek Board approval to accept an in-kind donation of site furnishings from Landscape Forms and authorize implementation of a pilot placemaking installation on the South Kalamazoo Mall.

Background

At its April 14, 2026 meeting, the Placemaking Committee reviewed and discussed a proposal from Landscape Forms to support activation of the South Kalamazoo Mall through high-quality, flexible public furnishings. The proposal includes an in-kind contribution of up to \$100,000 in site furnishings to establish two pilot zones:

A lounge space to encourage gathering and passive use



PLAN VIEW

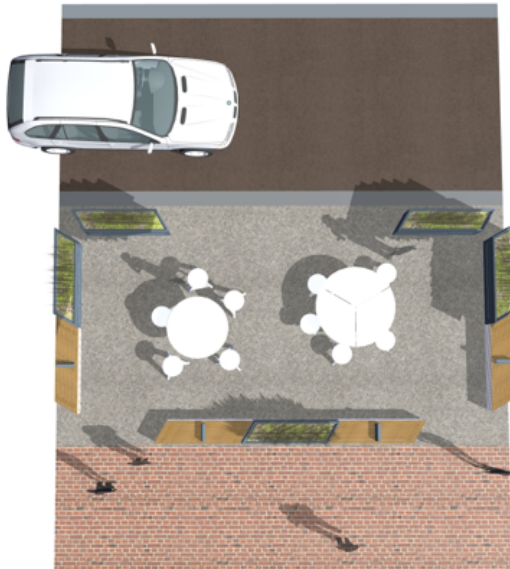
Kalamazoo Mall



PERSPECTIVE

Zone 4 Typology – Lounge Zone

A dining/activation space to support adjacent businesses and programming



PLAN VIEW



PERSPECTIVE

Kalamazoo Mall

Zone 1 Typology – Dining Zone

These improvements align with the DEGA’s Strategic Plan and ongoing efforts to enhance vibrancy, support downtown businesses, and test adaptable public space concepts during a period of transition.

Proposal

If approved, the DEGA would:

- Accept the in-kind donation as the recipient entity
- Support installation of furnishings in two designated zones on the Kalamazoo Mall
- Assume responsibility for ongoing maintenance and care

Landscape Forms has identified two potential locations that align with the space and is continuing to explore installation approaches. Final determinations regarding product specifications, finishes, exact placement, and installation approach will be made following Board approval.

Financial Considerations

- **Donation Value:** Up to \$100,000 (in-kind)
- **DEGA Costs:** Ongoing maintenance and any associated site preparation, planting, or installation costs, as applicable

Any decisions with budget implications will be brought back to the full Board for approval.

Recommendation

The Placemaking Committee recommends approval of the proposed donation and authorization of next steps as outlined.

Action Requested

Motion to approve acceptance of an in-kind donation of site furnishings from Landscape Forms, valued at up to \$100,000, for installation on the South Kalamazoo Mall; to authorize the Placemaking Committee to finalize product specifications, installation locations, and installation approach; and to authorize the Board Chair to execute any necessary documentation, in consultation with legal counsel, to implement the project, with any decisions carrying budget implications to be brought back to the Board for approval.