

Message from Downtown Coordinator

Downtown Kalamazoo is alive with summer happenings—and we're just getting started. Beats on Bates is in full swing every Wednesday night, Restaurant Week kicked off July 17, and Summer Sidewalk Sales are back July 24–26 with great deals and local energy. As we celebrate the now, we're also planning ahead—refining the Ambassador Program, improving recycling through student audits, and growing Downtown Dollars to reach more businesses.

— *Meghan Behymer*



Ambassador Program

In June, Ambassadors removed 11,000+ pounds of trash, cleaned the Portland Loo 56 times, and made 59 hospitality assists. The team also placed 12 new flower planters for JumpstART weekend, began watering 11 concrete planters on the Mall, and refreshed downtown tree wells with new mulch.

Program led by: Meghan Behymer
(Downtown Coordinator)

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.

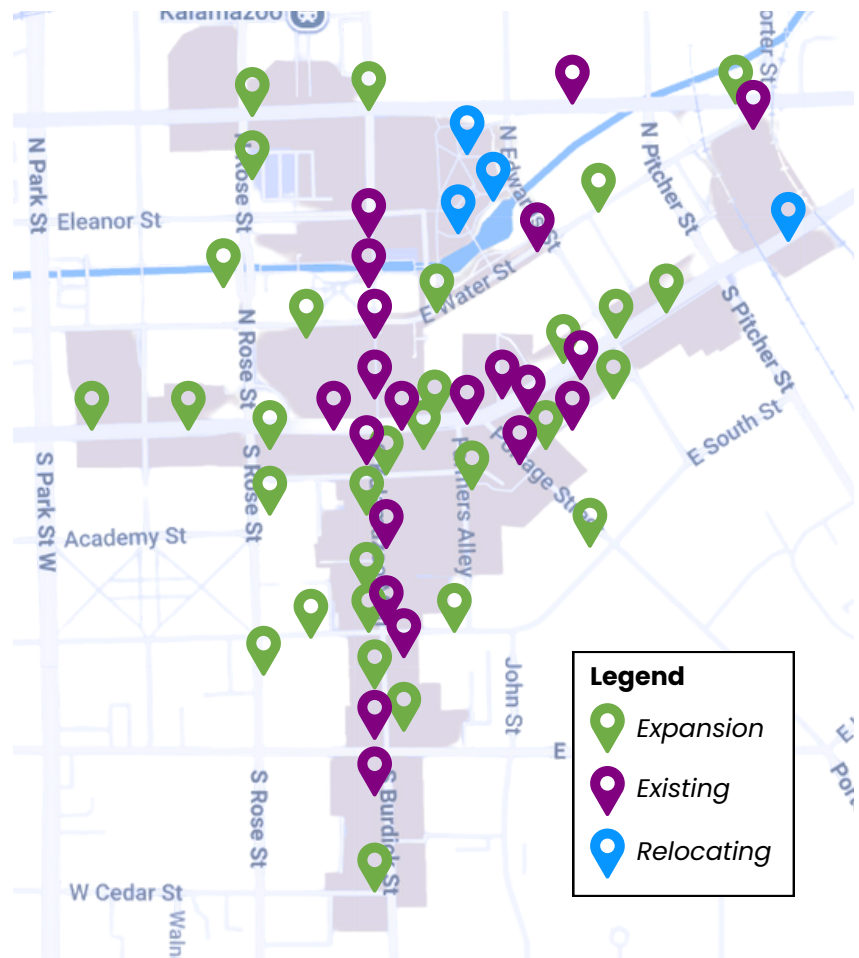
While the City conducts a pilot using temporary restrooms at three locations outside the DDA boundary (June–November), DDA/DEGA Board and staff are working in partnership with the City to explore downtown district locations through business surveys, potential pilot testing, and site evaluations. A final recommendation is expected later this year.



Bigbelly Waste & Recycling

The expansion of downtown's Bigbelly Waste & Recycling Program is moving forward. We are anticipating an August installation

- **Adding 26 New Units:** Expanding the network to 51 units will provide coverage and efficiency for collection
- **Relocating 4 Existing Units:** Optimizing placement based on waste patterns and pedestrian traffic will enhance service effectiveness
- **Unlocking Revenue Opportunity:** Next, we will build an advertising and sponsorship model to leverage Bigbelly as a sustainable, revenue-generating asset.



Sustainability in Action: Student Partnership to Improve Downtown Recycling

A new effort with Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College student interns is tackling contamination in downtown recycling bins—a major barrier to effective waste diversion. Over three weeks, interns are auditing recycling bins throughout downtown, separating recyclables from trash to gather baseline data. **Week one revealed 46% of materials placed in the recycling bins were non-recyclable.**

The goal? Smarter, photo-informed signage that helps people make better choices at the bin.

Why This Matters

- Reduces contamination and improves recyclability of collected materials
- Decreases long-term costs for waste processing partners
- Strengthens Kalamazoo's reputation for innovation in urban sustainability
- Provides real-world learning for students and strengthens university-city ties
- Unlocks future funding and sponsorship opportunities for waste and recycling improvements

This effort supports key goals of the DDA/DEGA by promoting a cleaner, more welcoming downtown and demonstrating fiscal and environmental stewardship.

Program led by: Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator), Chris Broadbent (Solid Waste Coordinator), Justin Gish (Sustainability Planner)

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

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.

2025 Planned Changes:

- **Upgrade Meters:** Replace outdated meters with smart tech; decide on meter type, payment options, and quantity.
- **Adopt Tiered Rates:** Update pricing model to reflect demand and include evening enforcement zones.
- **Improve Accessibility:** Address gaps in barrier-free parking per 2024 inventory and code standards.

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)

In the News

[See inside downtown Kalamazoo's new senior apartments, a \\$20M development](#)

[2 downtown Kalamazoo apartment projects get tax break for renovation](#)

['JumpstART Summer' with Pride, art and Do-Dah in downtown Kalamazoo](#)

[Kalamazoo redevelopment project seeks to transform old county courthouse into hotel](#)

Upcoming Events

Beats on Bates

Bates Alley

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

Restaurant Week

Downtown Kalamazoo

July 17 - 26, 2025

Summer Sidewalk Sales

Kalamazoo Mall

July 24 - 26, 2025



Southwest Michigan First Chamber

Downtown Kalamazoo Business Townhall

October 14, 2025 @ 2 p.m.

180 East Water Street
Kalamazoo, Mich. 49007

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. Design focus groups were held in April with community input, and a public meeting was held in early June to share proposed design recommendations.

WMU Economic Vitality Study

The WMU Economic Vitality Study is a collaborative research initiative between the City of Kalamazoo and Western Michigan University 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.

- Business survey updated with feedback from group of downtown businesses, fourth quarterly survey open until July 31st.
- WMU presented early findings at the July Downtown Business Town Hall.

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’s Office Liaison)

Downtown Dollars

May saw \$1,045 Downtown Dollars spent locally and \$1,450 in new purchases—supporting 19 of our businesses! A special welcome to our newest Downtown Dollars merchant - HopCat!

| 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 | | | |
| August | | | |
| September | | | |
| October | | | |
| November | | | |
| December | | | |
| 2025 TOTAL | 31 (55%) | \$8,430 | \$9,035 |

June 2025 Stats

\$1,450

SOLD

↑ 31% vs. June 2024

\$1,045

SPENT

↓ 23% vs. May 2024

Program Life Stats

\$518K

SOLD

\$364K

SPENT

\$135.5K

IN CIRCULATION

Program led by: Chelsie Downs-Hubbarth (Community Investment Manager), Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator)