



a vibrant, dynamic
imagine kalamazoo 2025

Fact Sheet: How We Make Our Vision a Reality

Our Vision and The Problem

- Our vision has always been a vibrant, prosperous Kalamazoo where folks want to live, work, and raise a family.
- For many years, budget challenges caused by the state and the Great Recession have impeded our effort to take the bold action needed to make our vision a reality.
- Put simply, without a solid financial foundation, we cannot build the Kalamazoo folks in this community want and deserve.

An Innovative Solution

- At a time when partisanship and stubborn problems seem like the norm, this community has shown its ability to rise above differences and come together to solve big problems.
- That's what we did with the Kalamazoo Promise. And with the Foundation for Excellence, we are trying to offer a unique, innovative solution once again.
- An income tax was and still is an option, but with the Foundation for Excellence, we believe that we have a unique solution to help us shore up our finances and make critical investments needed to build the Kalamazoo we all want.

What is the Foundation for Excellence?

- A commitment of \$70 million in the first 3 years, and a commitment to fully fund the endowment to provide a similar level of investment to Kalamazoo each year into the future with no end date
- The Foundation for Excellence is modeled after the Kalamazoo Promise. The Foundation will be funded by donations from area philanthropists, numerous Kalamazoo institutions, and ordinary citizens who are willing to chip in.
 - Our goal is to have the foundation fully endowed by year 3.
- The Foundation will provide resources each year to the City of Kalamazoo's which will be used to:
 - 1) Stabilize the City's budget,
 - 2) Immediately reduce city property taxes by more than 1/3, with a long-term goal of a 50 percent total reduction

- 3) Improve regional collaboration and advocate for State dollars,
- 4) Most importantly, make key investments to create a vibrant, forward- looking community that benefits everyone.

- There so many examples of key, transformational investments we can enact, like:
 - Promoting shared prosperity for all Kalamazoo residents and alleviating generational poverty.
 - Creating summer youth employment programs that have been so successful in other cities.
 - Revitalizing our neighborhoods with much-needed investments in infrastructure & beautification.
 - Jumpstarting small business growth through critical tech investments and start up assistance.
 - Investing in place making projects like an improved farmers' market.

What's Next?

- There are so many exciting elements of this approach, but one is the commitment to get started quickly.
- We already have initial commitments to start next year.
- The initial donors, who have committed thus far, understand that the legal framework we are shaping will mean that all dollars will have a clear purpose, but ultimately will be directed by Kalamazoo's elected leaders.
- Our intention and our hope with this philanthropic approach is that we are able to build a Kalamazoo that is more beautiful, is more livable, has more jobs, has less poverty, and provides young people the jumpstart they need in life.

Vision for the Future

- When a young person wakes up each morning in Kalamazoo 10 or 15 years from now, we want them to have their basic necessities covered, have pride in their neighborhood and their local parks, and to see Kalamazoo as a great place to stay, come back to, and settle down.
- That is our hope. That is our goal. We have a real chance to make that a reality with the Foundation for Excellence.