

City of Kalamazoo

Economic Development Strategy
September 2024

Appendix I

ROLES IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM

The City is one part of a larger ecosystem that makes for a healthy economic development environment in Kalamazoo. Improvements can be made to align the existing ecosystem with best practices (and innovation) in economic development practices.

City of Kalamazoo - CPED and other departments. In this strategy, the City is tasked with making necessary changes and refining processes within City government that create a healthy climate for businesses and neighborhoods to thrive.

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (separate from EDC) - It remains an all-volunteer board with staff support. The strategy amplifies its role in proactively preparing for redevelopment opportunities (See 3.3, 3.5).

Economic Development Corporation (separate from Brownfield Redevelopment Authority) - This remains an all-volunteer advisory board with staff support to oversee improvements in City processes. The strategy enhances its role in advising on implementing City-led initiatives (See 3.4).

DDA/DEGA - Supports growth and attraction of businesses downtown and works to drive the overall vibrancy of downtown and its connections to other parts of the city.

Southwest Michigan First- Remains a strong player in the attraction of traded sectors and advocates for the region.

Stakeholders/Existing Ecosystem -These are integral to the economic development landscape. A strong leadership entity within each subject area discipline must coordinate and direct vision for the collective stakeholders' strengths and assets to be realized.

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NEW

Kalamazoo Business Advisory Council -This council responds to a significant gap in the existing ecosystem. One of the core functions of this small group would be to evaluate the feasibility, viability, and sustainability of establishing a new (or the reworking of an existing authority/entity) economic development ("EDO") / place-making organization ("PMO"). See below for additional detail.

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NEW

Kalamazoo EDO-PMO - This is a longer-term (3-5 years) goal to achieve. In the first 18 months of this strategy, the entity would need to be thoroughly evaluated, and once that is done, it will take additional time to implement. This would require due diligence from a group of senior-level civic and business leaders who can leverage private sector resources to take actions needed to achieve community goals. Lessons learned from previous authorities need thorough, objective vetting to create a sustainable long-term model. Questions include: *What was the funding structure? What was the leadership structure? How were resources allocated? What factors led to success/failure?*