

CITY VIEW

Municipal Election Will be Held on November 4

Kalamazoo will hold a Municipal Election this year on Tuesday, November 4. Kalamazoo city voters will elect a Mayor and three commissioners to serve on the 56th City Commission. In Kalamazoo, the Mayor is elected to a two-year term, and City Commissioners are elected to serve 4 year terms in staggered elections.

City voters will also be asked to consider a millage renewal and increase for public transportation. Voters who live in the Comstock, Parchment, or Portage school districts will see school-related proposals on their ballots.

Local elections don’t garner the same amount of attention as national and state elections, but they are critically important. Make sure you plan to vote on or before November 4!

Absent Voter Ballots

All Michigan voters can vote early using an absent voter ballot. Absent voter ballots are available starting Thursday, September 25. Voters can request them online, by mail, or in person at the City Clerk’s Office at City Hall. Absent voter ballots can be returned in person, by mail, or placed in any of the secure City of Kalamazoo drop boxes. Absent voter ballots must be returned by 8 p.m. on

Election Day (but returning them early is a better option).

Drop Boxes

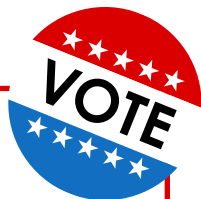
There are five secure drop boxes where you can return your election materials. They are checked daily and under video surveillance for additional security.

- City Hall, on St. John’s Pl near Lovell St
- Douglass Community Association, 1000 W. Paterson St
- City of Kalamazoo Stockbridge Office, 415 E. Stockbridge Ave
- Eastside Neighborhood Association, 1301 E. Main St
- Kalamazoo Public Safety Station 7, 2331 Parkview Ave

Work at the Polls

Election Day is staffed by people who live in our community. Administering free and fair elections depends on people like you, so consider becoming an Election Worker! You’ll help ensure the integrity of our election process so that the community can continue to have confidence in Kalamazoo’s elections.

Visit kalamazoo.org/elections for more information.



Important Dates

- Thursday, September 25**
Absent Voter Ballots become available
- Monday, October 20**
Last day to register to vote by mail or online and be able to vote on November 4
- Tuesday, October 21**
Voters must register in person at the City Clerk’s Office through 8 p.m. on Election Day to be able to vote on November 4
- Friday, October 31**
Last day to get an absent voter ballot sent to you by mail. The Clerk’s Office will be open until 5 p.m.
- Saturday, November 1**
City Clerk’s Office will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to assist voters.
- Tuesday, November 4**
Election Day. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Absentee ballots must be received by the City Clerk’s Office or placed in an official drop box by 8 p.m.

For help with voting services:

- 📞 Call 311 or (269) 337-8000
- 🌐 Visit mi.gov/vote
- 🌐 Visit kalamazoo.org/elections
- 🏢 Visit the City Clerk’s Office 241 W South St

Search Now Underway for Kalamazoo’s Next City Manager

After more than a decade of dedicated service, City Manager James Ritsema has announced his retirement, effective November 18, 2025. The Kalamazoo City Commission is now leading a transparent, community-driven process to select the city’s next manager: someone who will reflect Kalamazoo’s values and priorities.

In June, the Commission hired Raftelis, a national executive recruitment firm, to lead the search. Since July, Raftelis has engaged extensively with City Commissioners and community leaders to develop a candidate profile. In August, a survey invited community members to share the qualities and values they want to see in Kalamazoo’s next city manager. The survey results, along with stakeholder input, are guiding the ongoing national search for top candidates aligned with the community’s vision.

Vice Mayor Jeanne Hess, who serves on the City Commission subcommittee overseeing the recruitment, emphasized the importance of public participation: “Transparency and public engagement are at the core of this process, and the community’s voice will help us identify a leader who understands and represents Kalamazoo’s values.”

In-person interviews are planned for October, with opportunities for residents to engage with finalists before the Commission makes its final decision.

For updates and ways to get involved, visit kalamazoo.org/CityManagerSearch. The City Commission will also provide regular updates at their meetings to keep the public informed throughout the search.

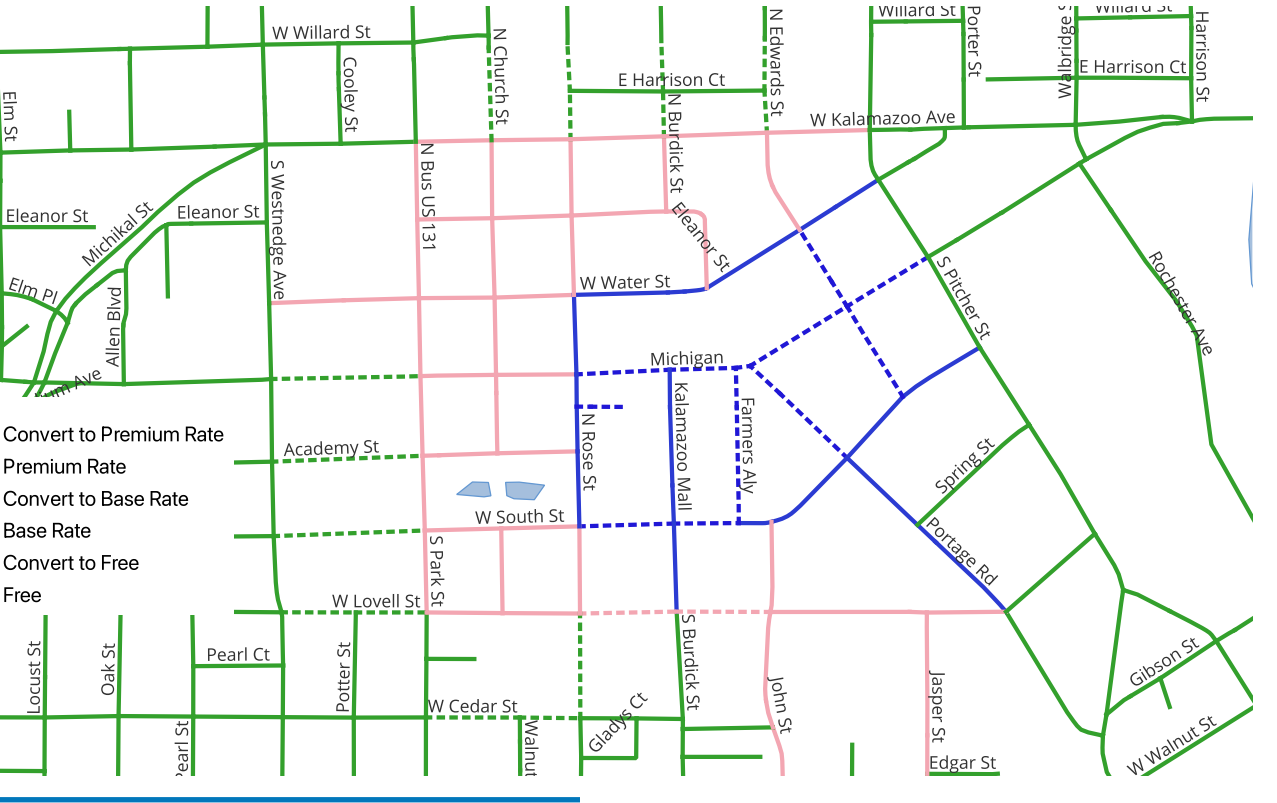
Design It! Phase Starting This Fall



Thanks to your voices at the Plan It! meetings (and all the other ways you’ve shared your thoughts), we’ve gathered a mountain of inspiring ideas for Kalamazoo’s future. We’re busy sorting through every comment, vision, and creative spark to turn them into clear goals and outcomes. While the original timeline had Design It! meetings starting in August, we’re taking a little extra time to make sure the community’s feedback is fully reflected. Watch for an announcement soon about Design It! meetings, which will be held throughout Kalamazoo’s neighborhoods, where our collective ideas will start taking shape as real plans.

Find resources about Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 at kalamazoo.org/IK2035.

Some streets will convert to free parking and some will convert to paid as efforts continue to modernize the downtown parking system based on demand. New modern kiosks will also be installed in some areas. Street signs provide notice of the changes before they take effect.



Downtown Parking Updates Continue This Fall

As part of the City’s ongoing effort to modernize Kalamazoo’s parking system, a new round of updates will roll out in fall 2025. These changes build on recent improvements (like free 90-minute parking in ramps and the installation of pay stations along the Kalamazoo Mall) and aim to make parking downtown easier, more accessible, and better aligned with current demand.

Modern pay stations that accept credit cards, coins, and mobile payments will begin replacing outdated meters on more downtown streets. The best-condition meters currently in use will be reused in areas with only a few spaces, where pay stations would not be cost-effective.

A simplified two-tiered pricing system will be introduced, with premium and base-rate parking zones determined by demand. Some lower-demand areas will shift to free parking. The base parking rate will also be reduced from \$1.75 to \$1.50 per hour.

To better serve all users, approximately two dozen new barrier-free parking spaces will be added throughout Downtown Kalamazoo.

These changes are based on parking studies and usage data, including the City’s Parking Management Blueprint and updated parking counts from 2024. They’re designed to ensure that parking is available where people want it, while improving the overall experience for everyone who parks



By removing some of the paved surfaces and thoughtfully developing housing with green space and stormwater management, 322 Stockbridge can welcome new residents and become an asset to our community. The concept above is just one option. The final design is not yet determined.

multi-family units to duplexes and single-family homes, with integrated parks, street connections, and green spaces. Both plans prioritize walkability, affordability, and environmental resilience, and reflect years of planning informed by the Edison Neighborhood Plan, community input, and housing studies.

This redevelopment is still in the planning phase, and community feedback will play a key role in shaping the final design. Environmental cleanup, infrastructure upgrades, and funding partnerships are also on the horizon as the City prepares for future construction.

Visit kalamazoocity.org/322Stockbridge to learn more about this project as it progresses.

New Indoor Sports Facility Moves Forward in Kalamazoo

Plans for a major new indoor sports facility in Kalamazoo are taking shape! In August, the City Commission approved the creation of a joint authority with the County to own and manage the facility. This new legal entity (the Kalamazoo County Event Center Assessment District) will oversee the development, ownership, and operations of the sports center once it opens.

The proposed facility, which will be located on Westgate Drive near West Main Street and US-131, is designed to fill a critical gap in youth sports infrastructure in the region. The design features eight full-size basketball courts (convertible to 16 volleyball courts) and an indoor turf field.

The project is being championed by Discover Kalamazoo, which commissioned a feasibility study identifying high demand for indoor courts and significant potential for sports tourism. Beyond offering new opportunities for local youth and underserved communities, the facility is projected to generate \$48.6 million in annual economic impact, create over 600 new jobs, and bring 36,000 hotel room nights to Kalamazoo each year, especially during off-peak seasons. Revenue from a 4% hotel assessment, overwhelmingly approved by area hotels, will fund the project.

Affordable Housing Under Construction for Victims of Trafficking, Violence

In July, community partners broke ground on Kalamazoo Community Courtyard, a new development in the South Westnedge Neighborhood that will provide 18 housing units reserved for survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, and one unit for a live-in caretaker. Residents will also receive supportive services from the Kalamazoo YWCA. All 18 resident units are Section 8-eligible, with rent capped at 30% of each resident’s income.

Projects like Community Courtyard don’t happen alone. This one was made possible thanks to funding from the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, and the Kalamazoo

A first look at Kalamazoo Community Courtyard, soon to be a safe, welcoming home for survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. This project is a great example of the community coming together, and of the complexities of getting this type of housing built.



Community Foundation. Plus, countless volunteer hours from supporters and partners, including Zero Day, Inc., YWCA of Kalamazoo, Visser Construction, and members of Southern Heights Church.

The City of Kalamazoo is proud to support this project and we can’t wait to see the transformational impact it will have for its residents.

Finding Your Way Home: Reuniting People for Stability

Some people experiencing homelessness in Kalamazoo find themselves here through circumstances beyond their control, whether brought by others or drawn by local resources. Some want to return home or move to another supportive environment, such as a community network or trusted shelter, but face personal or financial barriers. Reconnecting them with loved ones or familiar support systems can provide more than just a place to stay; it offers stability and emotional support that can help break the cycle of homelessness.

Since launching in 2023, the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety’s Finding Your Way Home program has reunited nearly 70 people experiencing homelessness with their family or support networks, often across the country. The program supports those who want to return home or to a chosen community by providing transportation and ensuring a warm handoff at their destination, so no one is left stranded in an unfamiliar place. People are often referred to the program by Integrated Services of Kalamazoo (ISK), Ministry with Community, local advocates, and Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries. The KDPS Community Service Team works alongside these partners to build trust and guide individuals through the process, helping them take steps toward a more secure future.

In August, Kalamazoo County committed \$15,000 to support the program, supplementing private donations and grants that have sustained it until now. This additional support will expand the program’s reach, connecting more people to stable communities where they can find the support needed for a brighter future.

Fall Parks & Rec Programs

School’s in full swing, and Kzoo Parks is ready to make your afternoons and

weekends even better! This fall, you’ll find after-school programs at three convenient locations across the city, plus youth sports including soccer, golf, volleyball, and even esports. Need a hand with registration costs? Kalamazoo Friends of Recreation can help cover up to 100% of program fees.

Visit kzooparks.org/programs to learn more and register.

Open House: Arcadia Creek Festival Place Design Update

Join us on September 30 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s Anna Whitten Hall for an open house on the exciting new design for Arcadia Creek Festival Place.

At this event, the final design will be presented, along with the construction timeline and project phasing. The project’s building design has just begun, but attendees may get to hear an overview of those early plans as well.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the project, ask questions, and share your thoughts as we move forward with creating a vibrant community space.

Follow along with this project at kalamazoocity.org/ACFP.

Wondering What’s Being Built? Check Out Site Plans Online

Have you ever driven past a construction site and wondered, “What are they building there?” You’re not alone, but there’s usually a way to find out.

Most major development projects in Kalamazoo must go through a process called site plan review before any construction or land preparation begins. This review ensures new developments meet the City’s design, zoning, and safety standards, and that they fit with the surrounding neighborhood and infrastructure.

As part of this process, developers submit detailed site plans that show what’s being proposed. These plans are reviewed by a team of City staff from planning, building inspections, utilities, and the Fire Marshal’s office.

These plans are also available to the public! You can view active site plan submissions at

kalamazoocity.org/siteplans. You’ll see diagrams and project details, and you can even submit comments to City staff during the review period.

Want to stay in the loop? You can subscribe for updates and get an email anytime a new site plan is submitted. Just click the “Get Updates for This Search” button on the site and enter your email.

Not all projects require site plan review, but most commercial, multifamily, or larger developments go through this process. Next time you’re curious about a construction site, check the City’s website. It’s a simple way to stay informed, engaged, and connected to what’s happening in your neighborhood.

View Kalamazoo’s Stormwater Management Plan

Stormwater management may not be glamorous, but it’s essential for protecting our water, preventing flooding, and keeping our community healthy. You can learn about the City’s Stormwater Management Plan at kalamazoocity.org/StormwaterPlan.

Give the Gift of Local with Downtown Dollars

Looking for an easy way to support your favorite downtown spots? Downtown Dollars make it easy to share the love of Downtown Kalamazoo. They work like a gift card and can be used at a wide range of restaurants, shops, and businesses in Downtown Kalamazoo. Buy them in \$5, \$10, or \$20 increments, use them right from your phone or print at home, and enjoy a flexible, feel-good shopping experience.

They make great gifts for friends, family, employees, or volunteers, and they’re perfect for fundraisers and group appreciation. Keep an eye out for BOGO promotions to get extra value (if available, you’ll see it in the order portal).

Visit kalamazoocity.org/downtowndollars to order online today and shop local all year long!





Brush the Block is Here!

Kalamazoo’s first-ever mural festival is here! From September 2–7, Brush the Block will transform downtown into an outdoor art gallery with live mural painting, art tours, community window projects, music, and more. Ride the free Salvador Troli to visit mural sites, meet the artists, and watch the creative process unfold. Don’t miss this celebration of art, color, and community. Find the full schedule at brushtheblock.com.

Experience the Magic of Canada at Canadiana Fest

Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 20, and get ready to celebrate all things Canadian at Canadiana Fest 2025! From 3:30 to 10 p.m. at the Arcadia Creek Festival Site, enjoy an unforgettable day of live music, delicious Canadian food and beverages, cultural activities, workshops, and family fun, all while supporting South Michigan Food Bank and Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes.

Explore Canadian traditions with Quebecois band Cécilia, local favorite Rock Rx, Indigenous artists, cultural workshops, the World Champine Poutine Competition, and so much more. You need a ticket to get in, but

this year admission is free (though there is a pay what you will option). Food, fun, music, and maple syrup await, don’t miss it! Learn more, view the schedule, and get tickets at canadianafest.fun.

Fall Festivities Are Coming to Downtown Kalamazoo!

Autumn is just around the corner, and downtown Kalamazoo is gearing up for a fresh and festive fall season. While some of the familiar decorations will return, we’re excited to bring new seasonal touches that celebrate the spirit of autumn.

Keep an eye out for updated displays and surprises that will make this fall season in downtown a fun and welcoming experience for everyone. Stay tuned, there’s more to come!

Halloween Forest

Mark your calendars: Halloween Forest is back at Milham Park on Saturday, October 25 from 2 – 4 p.m. This free, family-friendly event is a fun alternative to trick-or-treating, with fall and Halloween-themed activities for all ages. Expect plenty of candy, festive games, and seasonal surprises throughout the park.

Costumes are encouraged, and you might even win a prize in the costume contest! Halloween Forest is sponsored by Lake Michigan Credit Union and Kalamazoo Friends of Recreation. Learn more at kzooparks.org/HalloweenForest.

Expanded Downtown Recycling with New Smart Bigbelly Units

The City of Kalamazoo is enhancing its commitment to a cleaner, greener downtown by expanding the Bigbelly Waste and Recycling program. Funded by the Downtown Economic Growth Authority, this fall 26 new Bigbelly recycling units will be installed throughout the downtown area, replacing 58 aging traditional trash bins.

These innovative bins use smart sensors to alert collection crews when they’re full, reducing unnecessary pickups and preventing overflow. This technology not only keeps our streets cleaner but also improves efficiency and helps the city make smarter use of public resources. Keep an eye out for the new Bigbelly units downtown this fall!



241 W South Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007



Kalamazoo City Commission

City Commissioners are the elected representatives of Kalamazoo residents. The Commission meets twice each month at City Hall (241 W South Street), typically on the first and third Mondays. Informational Committee of the Whole meetings start at 5 p.m. and Business Meetings start at 7 p.m.



Mayor David Anderson
mayer@kalamazoocity.org



Vice Mayor Jeanne Hess
hessj@kalamazoocity.org



Don Cooney
cooneyd@kalamazoocity.org



Qianna Decker
deckerq@kalamazoocity.org



Stephanie Hoffman
hoffmans@kalamazoocity.org



Chris Praedel
praedelc@kalamazoocity.org



Alonzo Wilson
wilsona@kalamazoocity.org

Need Help? Just call 311!

Dial 311 for help with any City services or to report any issues. We’re available to help Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you’re outside the city limits, call 337-8000.

Report issues online anytime at kalamazoocity.org/311.



Watch Meetings Live

Meetings of the City Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and some other boards and commissions are televised and livestreamed by Public Media Network on Spectrum Channel 189-190, ATT Channel 99, and on the City of Kalamazoo’s Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Meeting Calendar

You can find information about boards and commissions, a meeting calendar, minutes and agendas, how to watch meetings, and more at kalamazoocity.org/meetings.

About City View

City View is an official publication from the City of Kalamazoo. It’s delivered to every household every other month.

