

CITY VIEW

Help Shape Kalamazoo’s 2027 Budget by Sharing Your Priorities This September

Each year, the City of Kalamazoo develops an annual budget that determines how resources will be used to provide City services, maintain infrastructure, support programs, and invest in the community. Work on the 2027 budget is already underway, and this fall is an important opportunity for residents to help inform the process before the budget is finalized.

The budget development process takes place over several months and considers a variety of information, including anticipated revenues and expenses, community priorities, infrastructure and capital needs, departmental plans, and long-term financial considerations. City staff develop recommendations based on these factors, which are then reviewed and ultimately considered by the City Commission.

Community input is an important part of that process. This year, residents can share their priorities through the 2027 Budget

Survey and at a community budget meeting in September. The survey asks residents to identify the City services and programs that are most important to them, where they would like to see increased investment, and what they believe is the most important issue facing Kalamazoo.

The community meeting will provide another opportunity to participate. Residents can learn more about how the City budget is developed, ask questions about the process, and share their priorities directly with City staff before the proposed budget is completed.

Following this period of community engagement, the budget process will continue throughout the fall. Capital plans are scheduled to be presented to the Planning Commission in October, followed by publication of the proposed 2027 budget later that month. The City Commission will review the proposed budget at a work

session in November, with a public hearing planned in December before final adoption.

The City budget affects services and investments throughout Kalamazoo, from public safety, streets, parks, and youth programs to water infrastructure, neighborhood services, economic development, and more. Taking the survey or attending the community meeting is an opportunity to help City staff and elected officials better understand what matters most to the community as they make decisions about the year ahead.



Share Your Budget Priorities!

Take the 2027 Budget Survey
kalamazoo.org/2027budget

Community Budget Meeting
Thu., September 17 | 6–7:30 p.m.
Kalamazoo Public Library, Central Branch
Van Deusen Room, 315 S Rose St.

Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 Strategic Vision Coming Soon for Community Review

After nearly two years of community engagement, Kalamazoo’s updated Strategic Vision is nearing completion, and the community will have an opportunity to review the draft before it is finalized.

The draft Strategic Vision is expected to be available for public review in September. Depending on when this issue of City View reaches your mailbox, it may already be available. The Strategic Vision will establish where Kalamazoo wants to go over the next 10 years by defining the community’s goals and the outcomes we hope to achieve.

Since September 2024, Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 has recorded more than 5,100 points of contact through public meetings, surveys, Meetings on the Go, pop-up engagement,

presentations, partner meetings, youth activities, and more. This input has helped identify and refine the community’s priorities and desired outcomes.

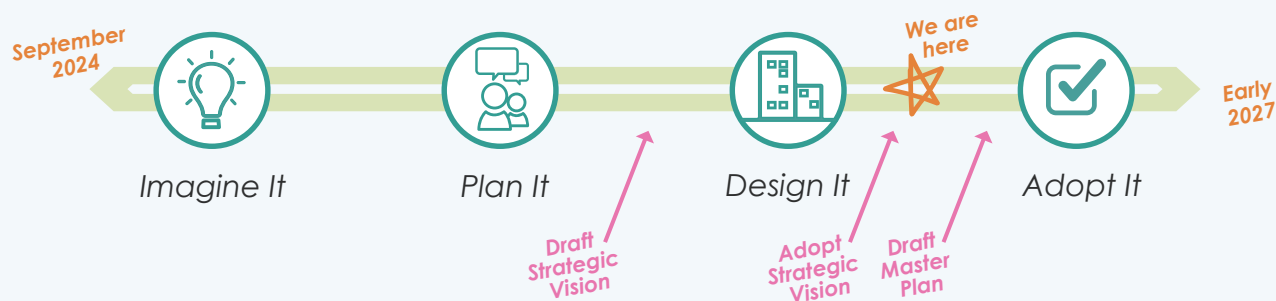
The process has moved through three phases of engagement: Imagine It!, Plan It!, and Design It! The Design It! phase concluded following 15 neighborhood open houses and a series of downtown events held during winter and spring 2026. The open houses brought planning to the neighborhood level, asking residents how community goals could be achieved and identifying opportunities and priorities related to housing, transportation, parks and recreation, the environment, economic vitality, neighborhood engagement, and what makes Kalamazoo a happy city.

Building on all of this input, the draft Strategic Vision is centered on creating a happy, healthy city, with goals and outcomes addressing housing; arts, culture and placemaking; the environment; community trust and safety; youth and family; effective City operations; economic vitality; and transportation.

Following public review, feedback will be considered before the Strategic Vision is anticipated to return to the City Commission on October 19 for consideration and potential adoption.

Once the Strategic Vision establishes where Kalamazoo wants to go, the updated Master Plan will help define how we get there. This fall, community subject-matter experts and City staff will build on the engagement completed through Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 to develop strategies, projects, programs, plans, and policies that can advance the Strategic Vision’s goals. Work on the Master Plan will continue through the remainder of 2026, with completion anticipated in early 2027.

Visit kalamazoo.org/IK2035 to check for the draft Strategic Vision, review it when available, and share your feedback.



City Commission Approves Moratorium on Data Centers

The Kalamazoo City Commission approved a temporary moratorium on new data centers and other similar developments at its August 17 meeting. The moratorium pauses the acceptance and/or processing of applications for data centers, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), cryptocurrency mining centers, and artificial intelligence data centers.

The pause gives the City time to research these types of facilities and develop regulations tailored to their potential impacts. Kalamazoo’s current Zoning Ordinance and City Code do not adequately address the unique challenges associated with these uses.

Potential concerns identified by the City include noise from cooling systems and backup generators, substantial water use for cooling, air and water pollution, fire risks, high energy consumption, and strain on existing utility infrastructure. Similar concerns have led other Michigan communities to adopt moratoriums while they research and develop appropriate regulations.

The moratorium established by the Commission’s August action is already in effect. Because the issue involves zoning and land use, it is also moving through the review process typically used for zoning matters. The Planning Commission was scheduled to review the moratorium on September 3, followed by a first reading before the City Commission on September 21 and a vote planned on October 5.

The current moratorium is in effect through August 16, 2027, unless regulations addressing these uses are adopted sooner or the zoning review process resets the timeframe. During this time, the City will research and develop appropriate regulations before new proposals move forward.

City Commission Considers Return of Call-In Comments

The Kalamazoo City Commission is considering bringing back the option to provide public comments by phone during its regular business meetings, giving residents another way to participate if they are unable to attend in person.

Commissioners discussed call-in comments at their August 17 meeting after hearing requests from community members to restore the option. Call-in comments were accepted during the COVID-19 pandemic, but current City Commission meetings provide public comment opportunities in person only.

During the discussion, commissioners expressed broad support for restoring call-in comments while considering how to make the process accessible and manageable. Vice Mayor Drew Duncan, who requested the discussion, said the option could make

meetings easier for residents to participate in and help the Commission hear from people who may not otherwise be able to attend.

The approach discussed would keep the general public comment period near the beginning of the meeting and allow both in-person and telephone comments at that time. Callers could speak about general topics or items appearing later on the agenda. In-person public comment would continue to be available on individual action items as they come up later in the meeting. Commissioners also discussed updated time limits for comments.

The Commission did not make a final decision on August 17. Instead, it asked that updated language be prepared for consideration at its September 8 meeting, with staff indicating that call-in comments could potentially begin with the first City Commission meeting in October. Because this issue of City View was prepared before the September 8 meeting, the Commission may have taken additional action by the time you receive it.

The latest information about City Commission meetings and public comment opportunities will be available at KalamazooCity.org/CityCommission.

Cannabis Social Equity Policy Expands Focus to Include Community Wealth Building

The City of Kalamazoo is expanding how funding generated through the local marijuana industry can support economic opportunity in neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by past marijuana prohibition and enforcement.

The City Commission approved an amended Marihuana Social Equity Policy on August 17. The original policy, adopted in 2020, focused largely on reducing barriers to participation in the regulated marijuana industry through incentives such as reduced permit fees and zoning exceptions for qualifying individuals and businesses.

After several years of implementation—and as the marijuana industry and market have changed—the City saw an opportunity to broaden how these resources support long-term economic opportunity. The updated policy retains incentives for qualifying marijuana businesses while shifting more of the Social Equity Fund toward community wealth building.

At least 25% of local marijuana business permit fee revenue and State marijuana excise tax revenue received by the City will continue to support social equity programs and initiatives, with a focus on measurable wealth-building outcomes for residents of the Northside, Eastside, and Edison neighborhoods.

Eligible uses include assistance with homeownership, starting or expanding businesses, acquiring commercial property,

retaining existing assets, estate planning, wills and trusts, title clearing, and business succession planning. Support for Kalamazoo’s licensed marijuana businesses will also continue.

The policy and related programs will be administered through the City’s Economic Development Corporation, which will oversee implementation and initiatives supporting its community wealth-building goals.

Share the Road and Look Out for Each Other

With school back in session, it’s a good time to remember a few important rules that help keep people walking and biking safe.

In Kalamazoo, **drivers are required to stop and yield at crosswalks for pedestrians and bicyclists who are crossing or waiting at the curb to cross.** Drivers also cannot pass another vehicle that has stopped for someone at a crosswalk.

Drivers also need to give people biking plenty of room. City ordinance requires at least five feet of space when passing a bicyclist on streets with one travel lane in each direction. Kalamazoo adopted its five-foot passing requirement in 2016.

Whether you’re driving, walking, biking, or rolling, slow down, stay alert, and look out for the people around you. A little patience and extra space can make a big difference in helping everyone get where they’re going safely.



Adopt a Drain and Help Protect Our Waterways

The City maintains thousands of storm drains throughout Kalamazoo’s streets, but crews can’t be at every drain every time leaves, litter, or debris accumulate. That’s where a little help from the community can make a big difference.

Through Kalamazoo’s new Adopt-a-Drain program, residents can choose a nearby drain, give it a name, and periodically help keep it clear. Keeping drains free of leaves, litter, and other debris can help reduce localized flooding and prevent pollutants from washing into local waterways.

Drains available for adoption have been selected with safety in mind, focusing on locations that are easier to access and away from heavier traffic. Participants will also find simple safety tips and instructions for caring for their drain on the program webpage.

It's an easy way to help care for your neighborhood and protect our water at the same time.

Visit ProtectYourWater.net/Adopt-a-Drain-Program to learn more.



New Pickleball Courts Open at Spring Valley Park

Pickleball players have a new place to play in Kalamazoo! Six new pickleball courts are now open at Spring Valley Park, replacing the park's old courts and adding another recreational opportunity at one of Kalamazoo's largest parks.

The courts are located next to the playground at the north end of the park, near the water tower at 2600 Mt. Olivet Road.

Grab your paddle and check them out!



Can Am Peace Jam Takes to the Streets in New Downtown Location

Can Am Peace Jam is moving to a new location in downtown Kalamazoo for this year's festival on Saturday, September 19, from 1–11 p.m.

Reimagined under the theme "Takin' It to the Streets!", the festival will take place along Water Street from the north end of the Kalamazoo Mall to Edwards Street, with activities also planned at nearby Haymarket Plaza.

The move comes as Arcadia Creek Festival Place remains closed while the City continues environmental assessment and remediation work at the site. The closure is a precautionary measure while that work continues. The City appreciates the flexibility of festival organizers and has worked with them to help identify alternatives that allow the event to move forward.

Can Am Peace Jam is a grassroots cultural festival celebrating music, peacebuilding, creativity, and cross-border friendship.

Performances, workshops, family activities, and other festival programming are still planned for the relocated event.

Learn more and find ticket information at canadianafest.fun.

Sounds of the Zoo Brings a Week of Free Music to Kalamazoo

Sounds of the Zoo returns September 21–27 for its fifth year, bringing a week of free live music to venues throughout Kalamazoo.

The multicultural music festival will feature 50 bands across eight locations, showcasing local, regional, national, and international performers and a wide variety of musical styles. The week culminates with three days of programming in Bronson Park.

More than a music festival, Sounds of the Zoo brings people together through music while supporting Kalamazoo's arts and cultural community. The festival also promotes diversity and inclusion, environmental sustainability, and mental health awareness.

All festival events are free. Find more information at SoundsOfTheZoo.com.

Fall into Fun with Kzoo Parks

School is back in session, and Kzoo Parks has plenty of ways to keep kids active, learning, and having fun this fall! After-school programs offer homework help, activities, and time with friends, while youth sports and recreation programs include soccer, golf, bowling, volleyball, orchestra, and esports.

Need help with registration costs? Kalamazoo Friends of Recreation can cover up to 100% of program fees for eligible City of Kalamazoo residents.

Explore programs, find schedules and locations, and register at kzooparks.org/programs.

Seasonal Park Amenity Closures Begin October 1

Restrooms, water fountains, and some vehicle gates at City parks will close for the season beginning October 1. Parks remain open year-round from 8 a.m. to sunset, with nearby parking available where gates are closed. Seasonal amenities will reopen May 1.



Save the Date for Halloween Forest on October 24

Halloween Forest returns to Milham Park on Saturday, October 24, from 2–4 p.m.! Save the date for this free, family-friendly fall tradition featuring Halloween fun and activities throughout the park.

More details are coming soon, so stay tuned and start thinking about your costume!

Infrastructure Investment Continues Across Kalamazoo

Major investments in streets, water systems, utilities, and other infrastructure continue across Kalamazoo, replacing aging systems and preparing the community for the future.

On Kalamazoo Avenue, crews have already installed the mainline water main scheduled for 2026. As of late August, the new main was being tested before final connections are made to the system and nearby properties. Consumers Energy is also making progress on the underground duct bank that will allow overhead power lines to be moved underground. Next, crews will focus on stormwater work and rebuilding the street with new sidewalks, curbs, pavement, and street trees before reopening for the winter. Construction will resume in 2027 and continue east to Harrison Street.

On Burdick Street, the new water main has been installed between Emerson and Balch streets. After testing and connecting properties, construction will continue toward Stockbridge.

The East Main Street water main project is progressing toward Gull Road, where crews will bore beneath the roadway to minimize traffic impacts as the new main continues toward the City's well fields at Spring Valley Park.

Investment is happening on neighborhood streets, too. The City's annual local street paving program is improving streets throughout Kalamazoo, including Parkview Avenue between Drake Road and Tamsin Avenue.

Together, these projects represent a significant investment in the infrastructure Kalamazoo relies on every day—and much of the work happening today will serve the community for decades to come.



Left: New water main on Kalamazoo Ave is connected to the water system. The old main being replaced is visible where it has been cut. Top: Crews install an electrical duct bank on Kalamazoo Ave. Fifteen conduits encased in concrete will eventually allow overhead power lines to move underground.



November 3 General Election: What Kalamazoo Voters Need to Know

Kalamazoo voters will head to the polls Tuesday, November 3 for the 2026 General Election.

Voters will consider candidates for federal, state, and local offices, including Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. House, Michigan Legislature, judicial offices, and local boards. Specific races and proposals vary by precinct.

City voters will also consider a citizen-initiated City Charter amendment related to healthcare affordability and access. If approved, it would establish a Citizens’ Healthcare Action Committee to gather public input, review healthcare issues, and develop a biennial Healthcare Action Plan with recommendations. The City Commission does not regulate healthcare providers, insurance coverage, or healthcare pricing.

Voters are encouraged to preview their sample ballot before voting at Michigan.gov/Vote.

Early In-Person Voting

Kalamazoo voters can vote early in person October 24–November 1, from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. daily, at any of these locations:

- Kalamazoo County Expo Center, 2900 Lake St

- Portage Parks & Recreation Department 320 Library Ln., Portage
- Fetzer Center at WMU, 2251 Business Ct
- Douglass Community Association, 1000 W Paterson St

Absent Voter Ballots & Drop Boxes

All Michigan voters can vote using an absent voter ballot without providing a reason. Ballots are available beginning September 24 and can be requested online, by mail, or through the City Clerk’s Office. Completed ballots can be returned by mail, directly to the Clerk’s Office, or at any City drop box:

- City Hall, St. John’s Place 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

Drop boxes are checked regularly and are under video surveillance. Ballots must be received by the City Clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Satellite Clerk's Office

Beginning October 12, the City Clerk’s Office will offer election services at a temporary satellite location at the WMU Fetzer Center, 2251 Business Ct. The office will be open Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Voters can register to vote, request or return an absent voter ballot, and get help with other voting services.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/Vote, contact the City Clerk’s Office, or call 311 or (269) 337-8000.

Important Dates

- **Thu., Sept. 24:** Absentee ballots available
- **Mon., Oct. 12:** Satellite Clerk’s Office opens
- **Mon., Oct. 19:** Last day to register online or by mail
- **Oct. 20–Nov. 3:** Register in person at the City Clerk’s Office/Satellite Office with proof of residency
- **Oct. 24–Nov. 1:** Early in-person voting
- **Mon., Nov. 2, 4 p.m.:** Deadline for registered voters to request an absentee ballot in person
- **Tue., Nov. 3:** Election Day; polls open 7 a.m.–8 p.m. Absentee ballots must be received by 8 p.m.



241 W South Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007



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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.



56th 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.

Watch Meetings Live

Meetings of the City Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and some other boards and commissions are televised and live streamed 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.



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