

CITY VIEW

From Mayor David Anderson

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *City View*. We have heard that many people would like to hear more about City activities, especially by mail. So, every other month you will receive a *City View* newsletter in your mailbox. We hope this newsletter improves communication and answers questions. We look forward to your feedback about articles that are helpful (or not) and topics or questions that you would like to have addressed.

We'll share events, news, project updates, and other important notices. We hope this will help you stay informed about what is happening in Kalamazoo and how to get involved, whether with a specific project or something bigger like the forthcoming Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 Strategic Vision and Master Plan.

Additionally, this is a time of change and uncertainty. We have important things to

work on together related to public safety, changes to and maintenance of our street system, economic development, housing affordability and homelessness, water, and wastewater, improving and maintaining our parks, supporting our beautiful downtown, responding to climate issues and making sure we are taking care of each other and building a community that is humane and inclusive. Lots to do!

Right now, we're reviewing the proposed budget for this fiscal year, and carefully considering how to invest City resources in the most effective way possible to address these issues. Approving our roughly \$300 million budget is one of the most important things the City Commission does. The budget is foundational for all the work that will happen in 2024, and includes planning, engineering, and design for work that will happen in coming years.

There is a brief overview below, and I encourage you to review the budget proposal and share your comments with

me and other Commissioners, by email or at City Commission meetings this month. Public input is vital for Kalamazoo's success. We welcome your opinion and perspective on these important decisions (you can find information about watching, attending, or commenting at meetings on the back side of this newsletter). Most importantly, this budget continues our work together in addressing our most pressing needs.

Kalamazoo is filled with leaders, hard workers and people who care. It is evident in our workplaces, schools, faith-based institutions, and neighborhoods. I am grateful to be a small part of this critically important work that is most effective when we work together and treat each other with dignity, love, and respect. Let's make 2024 a year of positive progress, together.



Mayor David F. Anderson



City Commission to Consider Budget at January 22 Meeting

The City Commission is expected to vote on the 2024 Proposed Budget at its meeting on Monday, January 22 (this meeting was rescheduled from the typical third Monday to avoid conflicts with other community events).

The Proposed 2024 Budget is \$288 million, which encompasses all funds: General, Water, Waste and Wastewater, Streets, all State and Federal funding, and the Foundation for Excellence. It is the seventh consecutive budget with a balanced five-year fiscal plan that would strengthen our community and the City organization without using cutting services.

The proposal includes \$18.4 million of the City's Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, and residents in Kalamazoo will continue to get more services and pay less in taxes thanks to \$20 million of support from Kalamazoo's Foundation for Excellence.

It will continue critical programs that prevent home tax foreclosures, fund or incentivize affordable housing, and protect families from lead exposure by remediating lead paint and replacing lead

water lines. It also will continue programs that support entrepreneurs starting or growing small businesses, like facade and remodeling grants, small business loans, and microenterprise grants. Youth would continue to benefit from free summer camp from Super Rec, career training and employment from MyCITY, and development and horizon building from the All Things Possible program.

Important investments will be made in the City organization to improve its operations and better serve the community. It invests in City facilities and staff, and funds technology upgrades to security, data, and critical organizational systems.

Several new programs are proposed in 2024 as well. The budget looks to expand childcare access with a new pilot to support providers and create new ones. It also funds a pilot program to clear high-traffic sidewalks to help people get around during winter. In Downtown Kalamazoo, the budget will start the process to update Arcadia Creek Festival Place, increase support for downtown events, and invest in planning for downtown's future. The successful

Downtown Ambassador program will continue and a new position will focus solely on Downtown.

More than \$77 million will be invested in our infrastructure, in things like our streets, parks, and utilities. A \$3 million proposed investment in City parks will renovate some of our most beloved parks, with projects planned for Milham and Verburg Parks, plus improvements to the trail at Spring Valley Park. The budget will continue investing in our streets, too, adding new and upgraded utilities, safer designs, and fresh streetscapes.

You can find the full 2024 Budget Proposal and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) at kalamazoo.org/budgets. You can share comments with City Commissioners via email or by providing public comment at the January 22 City Commission meeting.

The City Charter requires a budget proposal to be released by December 1 each year. The City Commission must adopt a budget by January 31.



View the 2024 Budget Proposal



Kalamazoo Elects 55th City Commission

There wasn't much time to settle in for the 55th City Commission, which held its first Business Meeting just moments after the newly elected Mayor and Commissioners were sworn in on November 20.

Mayor David Anderson was reelected, along with incumbent Commissioners Chris Praedel and Jeanne Hess (who has become the Vice Mayor after receiving the highest number of votes). Alonzo Wilson II has joined the Commission as its only newcomer, and Commissioners Stephanie Hoffman, Don Cooney, and Qianna Decker will continue to serve for the remaining two years of their terms through 2026.

City Commissioners are elected to serve staggered, four-year terms. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes in each election serves the first two years of their term as the Vice Mayor. Kalamazoo's Mayor is elected separately to serve a two-year term.

You can learn more about Kalamazoo's Mayor and City Commissioners at kalamazoocity.org/citycommission.

Enjoy a Taste of Downtown During Restaurant Week & Downtown Chili Cookoff

Downtown Kalamazoo's unique restaurants are the best in the region, and there's no better time to take a break from your kitchen than Restaurant Week! Starting January 25, participating restaurants will have exclusive dishes and specialty cocktails for you to enjoy. Whether it's at a new restaurant you've never tried or something new at one of your favorite places, don't miss out on this unique time to experience the culinary delights our city offers. You can find more information at kalamazoorestaurantweek.com.

On Saturday, January 27 you can help choose Kalamazoo's best chili as restaurants and shops downtown compete for the trophy during the Downtown Kalamazoo Chili Cookoff! Bundle up, get a souvenir spoon, and taste all the entries before voting for your favorite. With vegan and vegetarian options, there's always something for everyone. Find details at downtownkalamazoochicookoff.com.

Take a 'Day On' for the MLK Day of Service on January 15

Commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by taking part in the annual Community-Wide Day of Service on Monday, January 15. The Day of Service invites residents to put the teaching and philosophy of Dr. King into action by volunteering for causes that will make our community stronger and make our city a better place.

You can register to volunteer online through Gryphon Place at gryphon.org/volunteer up until the day of the event!

Following the day of service, a ceremony will be held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park at 507 N Rose St. Attendees will meet at the Metro Transit Building across the street at 3:45 p.m. and walk through the park before gathering for a ceremony at approximately 4:15 p.m. Mayor David Anderson will speak alongside leadership from WMU and KVCC.

You can find more information at kalamazoocity.org/MLK.

Updates to the Downtown Parking Network

Visiting downtown Kalamazoo? You can now park for **FREE** in the Epic Center and Kalamazoo Mall ramps! Both now offer free 90-minute parking, making it easier and cheaper than ever to park in downtown Kalamazoo.

This change is part of a series of updates in the works to modernize the downtown parking system and make it easier for people to visit and shop downtown. We're following the Imagine Kalamazoo Master Plan and the Strategic Blueprint for Downtown Parking and expect the following updates to follow soon:

- New management of the parking system, including maintenance and operations
- Parking meters added to the Kalamazoo Mall with more ways to pay
- Exploring overnight permits for downtown and neighborhoods

Drop Off Real Holiday Trees through January 31

Real holiday trees are biodegradable and easily recyclable! When it's time to take your tree down, you can drop it off to the parking lot at 322 E Stockbridge Avenue through January 31. Please only bring real trees and make sure to remove all ornaments and decorations first.

Winter Scavenger Hunt Starts February 14

Go on an adventure through city parks this winter to find hidden items on the Winter Family Scavenger Hunt! Use a map and clues to find items hidden in more than a dozen of our great city parks. Take a photo and share it for a chance to win prizes, too! The Scavenger Hunt starts on February 14 and ends February 28. It's self-paced, so explore at your own speed. Just make sure your photos are submitted before it ends. Visit kzooparks.org/ScavengerHunt for full details.



Explore Kalamazoo's city parks, follow the clues and find the hidden items in the Winter Scavenger Hunt!

It's Going To Be a Flurry of Fun on February 17

Bundle up and enjoy the world of fun that winter offers on Saturday, February 17 at Spring Valley Park! Flurry of Fun is a family event that embraces the fun side of winter with activities like sledding, kayak racing in the snow, obstacle courses, and ice bowling. We'll have some hand warmers and glow sticks on hand to make it more fun and help keep everyone comfortable, plus Coffee Rescue will have nice toasty drinks for sale too.

We'll have a handful of sleds on hand, but we encourage you to bring your own if you can!

Flurry of Fun is free. It's intended for families with children, but everyone is welcome. Find complete and up-to-date information at kzooparks.org/flurry.

Poll Workers Needed for 2024 Elections

In November 2022, Michigan voters approved Proposal 2, which expands voting access statewide. Some changes have already been in effect for Kalamazoo city voters, like improving access to drop boxes and prepaid postage for absentee ballots. Starting in 2024, all Michigan voters will have up to nine days of in-person voting for State and Federal elections.

To offer early in-person voting, our community is going to need more election workers than ever. The City of Kalamazoo has partnered with 17 local municipalities and Kalamazoo County to facilitate early voting in 2024. Working elections is a great way to help your community, support our democracy, and even earn some money too. Consider working as an election worker in 2024 and in the future. You can learn more at kalcounty.com/vote.

Presidential Primary Election on February 27

On February 27 Michigan voters will help choose candidates to appear on the ballot in November's Presidential Election. Make sure you use your voice in this and all elections!

Michigan's Presidential Primary elections are Closed Primaries, which means voters must select the party primary they want to vote in before being issued a ballot (Democrat or Republican). For voters on the permanent absentee ballot list, they will receive a selection form by mail to return before their ballot will be issued. This requirement only applies to Presidential Primary elections.

Visit kalamazoo.org/elections for more information about voting and elections, including how to sign up to work on Election Day.

Residential Zoning Update Planned This Year

Since the approval of the 2025 Master Plan in 2017, the Planning Division has been working to update the Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning is the set of rules that guide how a building is built or renovated and used. These rules include building height, building location on a lot, allowable uses, and requirements for landscaping, signs, parking,

and lighting. The last time the City fully updated its Zoning Ordinance was 2005!

In 2024, the City plans to update the residential zoning districts and standards. Look for meeting and timeline information as the project gets underway this year!

Help Us Improve the City's Outreach!

We're most successful when we work together, and we need as many voices as possible in public decision-making! For things like our community's Master Plan, street designs, policies, changes to ordinances, and many more important decisions, we need feedback from the community (you!).

Please take a moment to complete a brief survey about obstacles that might be preventing you from participating and let us know how we can make it easier. It just takes a few minutes and will help us reach our goal of welcoming everyone to participate.

Scan the QR code below or visit kalamazoo.org/EngagementSurvey to take the survey. You can also visit City Hall (241 South St), Community Planning & Economic Development Offices (245 North Rose St), or Public Services (415 E Stockbridge Ave) to complete a paper survey. Neighborhood associations will have copies too, or you can call 311 and have a survey mailed to you.



Take the Barriers to Engagement Survey Here!

Completing the survey will enter you into a drawing to win a gift card. The survey will be open until February 16, 2024.

This survey focuses on why you do or don't participate in City outreach and what we need to change for you to participate more often. The results will shape how we do future outreach, including Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 to update the City's Strategic Vision and Master Plan.

FFE Seeks Applicants to Serve on Board of Directors

Applications are now being accepted for two Director positions on the Foundation for Excellence (FFE) Board of Directors. The roles represent the Stakeholder areas of Neighborhoods and Education.

The FFE Board of Directors is responsible for governing and stewarding the FFE organization and endowment so that it can support the City of Kalamazoo and its residents forever. Directors govern operations and make funding recommendations to the City Commission each year for aspirational projects and initiatives that realize the community vision. Learn more and apply by January 31 at kalamazoo.org.

Public Safety Officers Help Spread Holiday Cheer

In December, Kalamazoo's Public Safety Officers helped residents shop for the holidays, with two events to spread cheer with our community.

Officers were delighted to help community members during "Shop with a Senior". 55 senior members of our community met for a lunch with organizations that offer services or help, like Metro, Community Homeworks, and Milestone Senior Services. Then, Public Safety Officers helped them on a shopping trip at Midtown Fresh, Park Street Market, or Town & Country where they were able to spend a \$150 gift card to prepare for the holidays.

Just a week later, young Kalamazoo residents were able to "Shop with a Hero" to get some of their holiday shopping done. Officers loved the opportunity to help kids between the ages of 7-11 buy gifts with a \$100 gift card from Meijer.

Our community's Officers are always grateful for these opportunities to connect with our community, spread holiday cheer, and help people in need during the holidays.

KDPS Hiring Will Open Monday, January 15

The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety will be accepting applications for Public Safety Officers (PSOs) between January 15 and 26. Serving your community as a PSO is a rewarding career where you'll make a difference every day. We'll pay for your training and there are many opportunities to advance and specialize throughout your career. Learn more & apply at kalamazoo.org/publicsafety.



Start a Career in Public Safety Today!



Kalamazoo's Public Safety Officers were delighted to have the opportunity to help shop for the holidays!

Help Plan Projects to Make Kalamazoo's Streets Safer

In 2023 the City of Kalamazoo was awarded a \$750,000 Safe Streets for All Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. It will help finalize some current planning work, pilot several traffic-calming measures, and ultimately develop a plan to reduce roadway deaths and serious injuries across the city.

We are currently planning the traffic calming projects that will be funded by this grant. Some are things like speed humps or traffic circles to slow traffic on neighborhood streets. Others are new cycle-tracks or adding protection for existing bike lanes. Visit kalamazoocity.org/SS4A to view proposed projects and provide comments on each. If you'd like to comment on more than one, you can submit the form multiple times. We're accepting feedback through January 31 and expect to start implementing projects this summer.



Help Make Kalamazoo's Streets Safer

Three Water Projects Honored as 'Projects of the Year'

In 2023, the Southwest Michigan Branch of the American Public Works Association honored three significant water projects in Kalamazoo's water system.

The first project rehabilitated water mains in the Milwood Neighborhood. Covering approximately 7,450 feet, the project used the Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP) to create a new, corrosion-resistant pipe without any excavation.

The second project installed three miles of new 24-inch water main on 33rd Street in Comstock, improving system reliability by connecting different parts.

The third project extended water main to provide public water on Big Rock Drive in Oshtemo in a collaboration with the KL Avenue Group.

Each project received the Chapter's Project of the Year Award, which recognizes excellence in the management of public works projects. The projects were recognized in the categories of Environment, Intergovernmental Cooperation, and Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair, respectively.

Looking to Get Involved? Join a Board or Commission!

The City of Kalamazoo has several boards and commissions that advise the City Commission on specific topics, like public safety or the environment. Some even serve a quasi-judicial role in planning or zoning processes. Serving on a board or commission is a great way to get involved in your community. Members serve on a volunteer basis, and term lengths and requirements vary by board. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, so you can apply at any time. When there's an opening, the board will review the current applications, select a candidate, and start the nomination process.

You can find a list of boards, a meeting calendar, and other information at kalamazoocity.org/boards. To learn more about applying, just click the "Apply to Join a Board or Commission" button.

Want News and Events In Your Inbox?

We send an email newsletter twice a month filled with news and events, plus share information on social media. Stay in touch at kalamazoocity.org/connect.

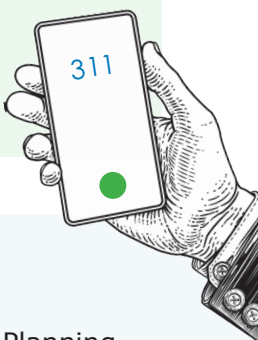


241 W South Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

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.

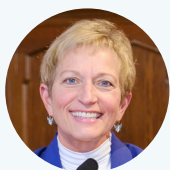


Kalamazoo City Commission

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

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.