

## **Downtown Revitalization**

A Project 20/20 Leadership Meeting

May 27, 2009

United Way, 7:30 a.m.



### **Welcome and Opening Comments**

Talia Champlin opened the meeting with introductions and reviewed the 2009 meeting schedule. The topic of this meeting was “Downtown Revitalization.”

### **Jim Hettinger – Battle Creek Unlimited**

Jim spoke on the opportunity to create an enhanced food science image for the Battle Creek community. The plan, being developed by Battle Creek Unlimited, identifies multiple aspects of moving forward. He stressed the importance and urgency of acting now, and he emphasized the need to recognize the economic benefits in education and jobs.

There are multiple parts to the plan being proposed. One aspect relates to the exciting new plans being put into place around food safety research and training. Investment has already been made in developing programs to meet the needs of homeland security and national food testing. Another important part of this plan involves centralizing educational opportunities within the downtown area, including moving the Math and Science Center to the vacant Cereal City USA site. The objective is to promote and retain local talent by exposing students to potential career opportunities early in their education, by being in close proximity and engaged in potential intern programs. The plan also calls for a facelift to the downtown area. The plan includes extensive use of lighting, green-space, and color. The plan is to draw pedestrian traffic and provide for common park space creating a brighter, professional appearance. The objective is to lift the image of Battle Creek as it steps into a role reminiscent of its past as a leader in food and health science.

### **Group Discussion and Input**

Following Jim’s presentation, the group was asked to consider the following question:

**Based on what we heard, what opportunities exist to take this concept to the next level?**

### **Opportunities Identified** (the record of all notes are at the end of this document)

Summary bullet points:

1. Get community members to go out and advocate for it.
2. Market math and science education. Give it a CSI-kind of flair.
3. 100 people in town for food safety training need to have a positive experience. We need to have volunteers, ambassadors to help with that.
4. Give positive feedback to City Commission and School Boards to support.
5. Engage youth in the planning.
6. Incorporate more food safety into local science curriculum.
7. Establish and maintain a sense of urgency.

8. Begin by improving traffic flow and railroad crossings in the downtown area.
9. Support the employers that are here.
10. Change mindset to see B.C. as a professional community.
11. Make the park practical to use and appealing year-round.

Re-occurring Comments of Support:

1. Excited about opportunities.
2. Great to have a vision with a plan! – Take action and be bold.
3. A remodeled Cereal City as the Math and Science Center is a multiple commitment to education, to youth, and to downtown!
4. Food safety is a great investment for our community.
5. People are hungry for change.

Following the feedback from members, Jim emphasized the need for the community to voice their support to their City Commissioners and to participate in School Board Meetings. Copies of the DVD, Creating and Curating the Battle Creek Renaissance, were made available to everyone attending the meeting.

**Closing Comments**

All members are encouraged to attend the next Project 2020 community event scheduled for June 16 at Burnham Brook. The topic will be “Shaping Community Success” with a focus on how the Battle Creek community has been taking steps to become engaged as individuals and in neighborhoods to help create change. This event is a great follow-up to what we worked on at this meeting.

Members were asked to complete a survey, make a donation, and invite others to join us.

Recognizing the impact of summer vacations, there will be no meetings scheduled in July and August. Therefore, the next Leadership meeting is planned for September 23, 7:30 – 9:00 at the United Way Board Room. A notice and agenda will be distributed prior to that meeting.