

**Battle Creek Downtown Transformation – What’s in it for You?  
Community Forum Hosted by Project 20/20 and Battle Creek Unlimited  
November 10, 2010, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Burnham Brook Community Center**

**Attendee Questions**

**With the STEM project, how does this serve students other than BCPS? What about kids at CACC?**

The STEM project is two-fold. In the presentation, Dr. Hicks talked about the BCPS STEM initiatives and then the county-wide STEM collaborative. Since the collaborative has not taken place yet, it is not known what effects there will be on community members and schools. Key players will decide how we make our community STEM focused and what that will look like in various places. BCPS has projects they will undertake as a district, and the community will have projects as well. BCAMSC is writing a small grant for the facilitation of the county-wide STEM piece.

CACC will have the opportunity to join in the conversations just as all schools and entities.

**Rumor has it the Math & Science Center is going to move to old cereal museum. Who is going to pay?**

The plan to relocate the Battle Creek Area Math and Science Center is still a proposal. Through an engineering and architectural evaluation, the former cereal city museum has been identified as one of the best facilities for the BCAMSC. IF the BCAMSC moves to the Cereal City Museum site, it will be remodeled using private dollars.

**Who is going to maintain the project after it’s complete? How will the City keep an events park clean?**

Everyone needs to maintain what the Downtown Transformation is bringing to Battle Creek. The industries and businesses that have grown as a result of the Transformation will work downtown and keep up their facilities. Businesses that move into leased offices or occupy buildings will maintain their spaces. The City of Battle Creek will continue to maintain the streets and public areas.

While there is an events plaza in the downtown streetscape plan, it is in the very early stages of development and it doesn’t yet have a location or design. When and if created, a maintenance plan would be part of the building strategy.

**What “green” venues are being incorporated in this new process?**

The plan is very mindful to the environment. There are several green venues, especially in the downtown public infrastructure areas. In general the design is based on a green streetscape that will focus on the pedestrian experience by creating a seamless walkable network with some interactivity.

Here are specific examples:

- Sidewalk and Plaza Pavements – The plan will use three different types of clay pavers that have design and sustainability benefits.
- Storm Water Management – One product to be installed is called the Silva Cell, an underground system that provides a health environment for vegetation and treats storm water pollutants from run off.
- Benches – All pre-cast concrete benches will have recycled porcelain and recycled steel.
- Lighting – The main light fixtures will be dark-sky friendly, which reduces light pollution and glare. They also will feature LED, which requires up to 75 percent less maintenance.
- Plant Material – Native plants will be used to cut down irrigation needs.

You can see the concept drawings and material samples at the Battle Creek Downtown Partnership at 115 W. Michigan Avenue.

### **What do the lights look like? Are we having gooseneck lights and the retro?**

The lighting plan continues to be evaluated based on aesthetics, efficiency, and effectiveness with the dark sky theory in mind. The final materials and products will be selected out of several options that match the water-history theme created by citizens during streetscape workshops last January. A sample light, an LED modern style, was at the November 10 Community Forum, and it is a strong consideration that meets the requirements. The landscape architect, Beta Design, is working with the samples that match the water-history theme.

### **You talk about the blight downtown – the blight in the neighborhoods close to downtown is worse – any plans?**

The City of Battle Creek invested \$1.95 million in blight removal in 2009 and 2010 as a part of its Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The program focused on pockets of concentrated blight within one mile of downtown and resulted in five rehabilitated houses and 130 demolitions. The second phase of the City's program will be implemented from 2011 to 2013 in partnership with the Calhoun County Land Bank. It will dedicate another \$8.5 million for demolition, land assembly, rehabilitation, redevelopment, and neighborhood planning in neighborhoods surrounding downtown. Another 62 houses are scheduled for rehabilitation and 80 additional blighted properties will be demolished.

### **What are incentives for businesses to locate downtown? What is preventing small businesses from getting into downtown properties?**

There is nothing preventing any viable, well-planned business from coming to Battle Creek, whether it's downtown or elsewhere in Calhoun County.

Several organizations work toward bringing more businesses to the area. They have incentive programs and resources to attract a wide range of companies, from large international corporations to budding entrepreneurs.

One well-known community development organization is Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU), which is a private non-profit group. BCU has a technology accelerator program and the Direct Investment Fund which provides loan or equity capital for eligible new or existing businesses in the City of Battle Creek. Visit <http://www.bcuunlimited.org/open-for-business/business-resources>.

If BCU sees a good business plan for economic development, it will work out an investment proposal for viable small and large businesses. Depending on the fit, those businesses may be placed in Fort Custer Industrial Park, W.K. Kellogg Airport, downtown Battle Creek or another part of Calhoun County.

For people who want support for entrepreneurial ventures, BCU and other groups offer several resources, and they could be aimed toward placing a business in downtown Battle Creek. They include:

Center for Entrepreneurship (CFE) – Based at Miller College, the center connects entrepreneurs with resources at any stage of their budding ventures. In partnership with BCU and education institutions, the center can place businesses in physical and virtual incubators, offer business coaching or provide networking contacts. For example, Generation E Institute ([www.genei.org](http://www.genei.org)) and SCORE ([www.score.org](http://www.score.org)) specialize in counseling and training. Also visit BCU's website for more information: [www.bcunlimited.org](http://www.bcunlimited.org).

Kellogg Community College's Entrepreneurial Certificate Program - The College provides affordable education and training to foster and develop entrepreneurial interest. Go to [www.kellogg.edu](http://www.kellogg.edu).

Battle Creek Self Employment Program - The Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce and other partners initiated the program to address poverty. It provides intensive and comprehensive training, counseling and mentoring to fledgling entrepreneurs. Go to [www.battlecreek.org](http://www.battlecreek.org).

Battle Creek Downtown Partnership – The non-profit is part of BCU and offers downtown businesses many programs, including the following. For more information, visit [www.downtownbattlecreek.com](http://www.downtownbattlecreek.com).

- Direct Investment Fund
- Façade Improvement Program
- Flower Pot Program
- Property Prospect Program
- Design Assistance

**What happens next? How do I continue to be involved and more importantly how am I influencing decisions? How do I get involved in a direct follow-up way – to ideas here tonight? How set are the Downtown Transformation plans? Can a great idea tonight \*REALLY\* change this plan?**

The Downtown Transformation will go into its third year with the same mission of four pillars: building a food science industry, integrating education into the Transformation with a strong STEM emphasis, supporting private investment (such as Kellogg's commitment to the community), and building an infrastructure to support the growth.

Some of the pillar development, such as Kellogg's relocation and food protection non-profit and business launches, are implemented through private investment and project management.

However, citizens can influence other pillars where the Downtown Transformation meets the public. For example, when citizens wanted to contribute ideas for the streetscape design, BCU

and landscape architect Beta Design held public workshops (November, December 2009 & January 2010) for ideas. Many of the ideas were built into a water-history concept now being implemented into the streets. The Jackson Street Access, which will be fully constructed with the water-history streetscape theme by December 2010, is an example of how input turns into an actual element of the Transformation.

Transformation project managers from BCU will continue to gather input where it can be applied. The discussion groups from the November 10<sup>th</sup> Community Forum presented some ideas on reducing blight that are being evaluated. Other opportunities for public input will present themselves over the next three years, such as the look and function of a proposed public events plaza.

In 2001, Transformation project managers will continue to implement the infrastructure pillar with a new streetscape and lighting along Michigan Avenue and recruitment of new retail businesses. Superintendent Dr. Hicks will lead exploration to relocate the Battle Creek Area Math and Science Center. Our corporate citizens in food innovation, production and protection will continue to grow business locally with promising opportunities for more jobs and integration with local education organizations.

Here is what the community can do NOW to help the Transformation:

- Learn more about the Transformation Plan online or in person at Battle Creek Unlimited and Downtown Battle Creek Partnership. See concepts. Read literature. Ask questions. Attend downtown events and volunteer for downtown improvements.
- Become involved in one or many non-profit organizations (such as Project 20/20) that aim to positively change the community through involvement and input.
- Learn about entrepreneurial and small business opportunities at Battle Creek Unlimited. Take advantage of business incubators and high technology utilities that connect local businesses to the outside world.
- Consider a career in food science or technology. Battle Creek's learning institutions offer programs and internships. Support efforts to build more educational opportunities.
- Talk with decision makers. Direct concerns to the appropriate government, non-profit organization, business or individual.
- Contact your elected officials (Federal, State and local) to keep them informed about community progress. Ask for their support and involvement.
- Attend neighborhood and public meetings. Learn about community plans and contribute to the conversation.
- Buy local goods and services from downtown businesses and the Farmer's Market. Dine at downtown restaurants or cafés as regularly as you can.
- Support beautification efforts. Support the Arts. Report blight, vandalism, graffiti and littering.
- Share information with your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors.

### **How can we have a community being referred to safe food when we just experienced an oil spill?**

Our community has the expertise to protect the public locally or internationally. The level of training of the emergency response personnel redeemed itself as the Kalamazoo River spill was contained quickly. These are the same people who respond to truck accidents on I-94 when there are hazardous spills. Their level of training and their capabilities ought to be a shining example for the rest of the country which also deals with an aging infrastructure.

The food safety experts in our community are called to action in these types of emergencies, so we're fortunate to have the expertise to protect our public. For example, The IFPTI was called to help during the Gulf of Mexico Oil spill and it performed admirably. IFPTI also was on hand for our spill, too.