

Community Statistics and Map

Note: Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (source suggestions: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics).

POPULATION (in year 2010 or most recent): 51,534

Source/Date: U.S. Census, 2016 estimate

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2000-2010 (indicate + or -): -19%

Source/Date: U.S. Census, 2010

RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN:

White	<u>60.5%</u>
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	<u>6.8%</u>
Black or African American	<u>18.5%</u>
Asian	<u>2.5%</u>
American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN)	<u>0.9%</u>
Mixed Race	<u>5.4%</u>
Other	<u>0.9%</u>

Source/Date: U.S. Census, 2012-2016 Community Survey, 5-year estimates (American FactFinder)

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: \$38,216

Source/Date: U.S. Census, 2012-2016 Community Survey (2016 dollars)

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 20.8%

Source/Date: 2016 American Community Survey estimate

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 5.9%

Source/Date: American FactFinder 2016

POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP (percentages, if available):

19 years old and under	<u>27.6%</u>
20-24	<u>6.9%</u>
25-44	<u>26.2%</u>
45-64	<u>25.1%</u>
65 and over	<u>14.2%</u>

Source/Date: American FactFinder 2016

PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP: 59.6%

Source/Date: U.S. Census, 2012-2016 Community Survey

WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors (include military services and/or installations, if any) in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:

<u>Manufacturing</u>	<u>25.9%</u>
<u>Education services, health care, and social assistance</u>	<u>19.9%</u>
<u>Retail trade</u>	<u>12.1%</u>

Source/Date: American FactFinder 2016

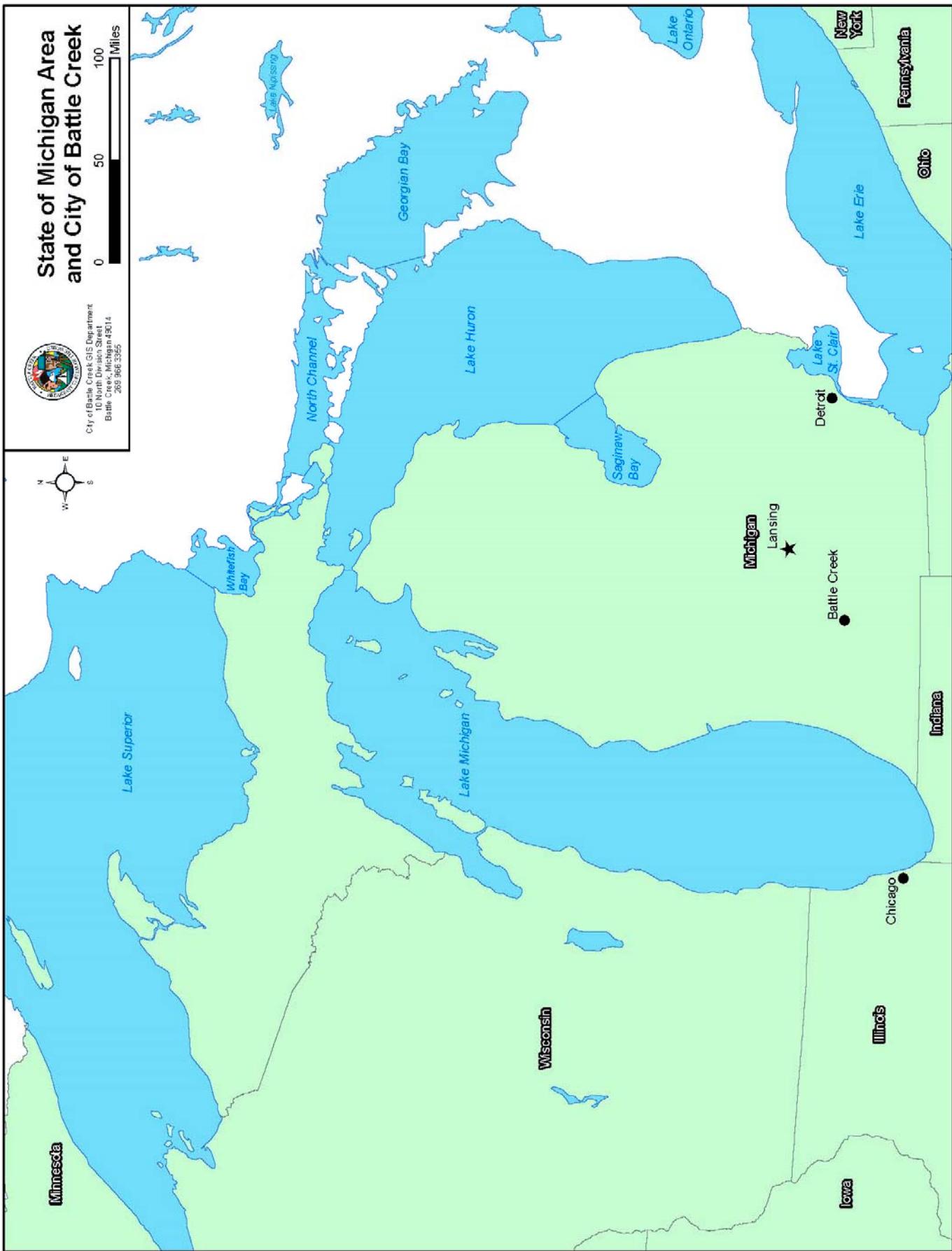
MAP -- Please attach a state map (8.5" x 11") with your community clearly marked – **See following page**

State of Michigan Area and City of Battle Creek

100
50 Miles



City of Battle Creek GIS Department
10 North Division Street
Battle Creek, Michigan 49014
269.966.3365



PART I: How equitable are opportunities in your community?

We believe our team members must understand equity before we can effectively change our policies to reflect better equity and equal opportunities.

To that end, we work with the Center for Diversity and Innovation (CDI) at Kellogg Community College, established just a few years ago with a three-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Its mission is to, “be the catalyst and collaborative partner in the community toward the creation of a more equitable and inclusive Battle Creek,” addressing a gap in our community.

City leadership are attending training courses offered through CDI. The first is Orientation to the Work, a free “equity 101” that provides knowledge about race and racism; foundational skills for preparing to take action; tools and practice; relationship building; and supportive and accountable dialogue.

Staff – police and fire personnel in particular – are attending CDI’s Coaching Essentials for Equity workshop, teaching participants core coaching skills to use with people in all aspects of their lives, specifically supporting CDI’s racial equity work. Participants learn to listen more deeply, have challenging conversations, and create more openness between people.

Finally, city commissioners and leadership attend the White Men & Allies learning lab. The goal is to transform a participant’s understanding of roles and personal stake in an organization’s diversity and inclusion efforts. It allows participants to understand how systemic racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism operate as an advantage in their work, community, and personal lives.

About 30 police officers also have attended White Men & Allies and, starting with a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant in 2015, the department has implemented implicit bias training, and a baseline study to guide the implementation of new policies and procedures. Initial training took place over 18 months, and now is provided to all new employees. The training teaches how biases, present even in well-intentioned people, can have an impact on community interactions, and methods to overcome those biases.

These programs are giving us the opportunity to bridge equity gaps in Battle Creek, and we anticipate the ability soon to improve our policies and engage in tracking of equitable opportunities.

Contracting and Vendors

Our city ordinance on purchasing, contracts, and sales requires that any subcontractor, supplier, or vendor subject to it, with 15 or more employees, submit equal opportunity employment compliance documentation with their bid or proposal. City staff may review their personnel policies, selection processes, and record-keeping processes that affect equal employment opportunity.

In addition, our bidding instructions include a “minority goal commitment,” that work will be “by contractors or subcontractors who have, as a goal, the employment of 10 percent minority workers on the site of the job.”

Under federal guidelines, our subcontractor requirements include that contractors must solicit minority and women-owned businesses whenever possible, and we do actively track contract and subcontract spending with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and Minority/Women Owned Business Enterprises in an Excel spreadsheet, both for one-time and multi-year contracts. Since 2016, we have seen growth of women-owned businesses.

We do not track smaller purchases, handled through our quoting process, like purchases under \$20,000.

City Staff and City Leadership

While our Human Resources Department tracks the race of our applicants, this is self-reported, and optional, so it is not a robust system.

Boards and Commissions

We do not have a process in place to ensure equitable opportunities for our community to serve on boards and commissions. However, staff recognizes we should have such a process.

We do have a Youth Advisory Board specifically for city neighbors ages 14-20, and a Human Relations Board, first established in 1986, and reactivated in 2015, after a 10-year hiatus. A city commissioner encouraged the reactivation, after we added gender identity to our anti-discrimination policies. This group works to increase constructive communication among all people, and offers advice and recommendations about equity practices and policies. It includes representatives from various religions, races, and others who have an interest in human relations, per the establishment ordinance.

Elected Officials

Voters elect nine city commissioners – four at-large positions and five ward positions. The ward positions provide for representation across our city, covering all demographics.

In the coming few years, this is subject to change. The City Commission recently established an advisory committee to consider changes to the city charter, as some commissioners have raised the issue, in particular, of equity and public participation in the choosing of our mayor. Currently, the elected commission votes amongst themselves to choose the mayor. Another item up for discussion is the size of the commission, and whether to continue with ward representation.

Infrastructure

Our city's size – third largest by geography in Michigan – requires that our snow removal and street sweeping are handled by individual maintenance district areas. For street sweeping, we rotate through these areas until the entire city is completed. The order of sections changes each year, and zig zags back and forth across the city – this year it starts in a central section, west to the airport, back to the north central section, and so forth, through the 12 sections other than our downtown.

We plow snow by priority of road class. We first handle major roads and bus routes, then head into local neighborhoods. We plow every maintenance section at once, and then double up in those sections still in progress. The goal is to finish all local streets as close to the same time as possible.

Road and utility maintenance starts with our Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The road network CIP was developed to be area-wide and based on preventative maintenance. We rate roads annually on a scale of 1 to 10. The idea is to keep all roads above a 4, considered the minimum so that routine, low-cost surface treatments preserve the streets.

We publicize annually these decision-making processes to inform our neighbors that, regardless of affluence, race, or geography, street and utility work is planned and scheduled based on the infrastructural needs.

PART II: Tell Your Community's Story

We Believe in Battle Creek.

This is a shared vision, a mantra, a way to tell our community's story, and an effort to engage and ignite the spirit of our community. It is an effort to revitalize our great city by creating and acknowledging positive change.

Begun in early 2017 by our Battle Creek Community Foundation, Believe in Battle Creek ...

- ... acknowledges what Battle Creek is today – and looks forward to tomorrow.
- ... is a vision of tomorrow's Battle Creek – a vision of what happens when people take a vested interested in crafting the future of our community.
- ... belongs to everyone in the way they wish to shape it.
- ... recognizes the positives, and capitalizes on the opportunities that exemplify a strong belief system in our community.

The city has evolved over almost 175 years, beginning with a conflict between land surveyors and Native Americans. By the end of the 19th Century, Battle Creek developed into a major industrial center, supplying a variety of goods to markets around the world.

We earned the moniker "Health City" for the health ideas of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, who ran the Battle Creek Sanitarium. In 1886, while experimenting with health foods, John Harvey and his brother, Will Keith, unwittingly developed a wheat flake that helped transform Battle Creek into the birthplace of ready-to-eat cereal. Following that, more than 40 companies – including Kellogg, Post, and Ralston – began producing cereal, hoping to profit from the trend.

Like others in the Rust Belt, we have experienced post-industrial struggles. However, we are known as "Cereal City," and seasoned neighbors can tell you which cereal you smell cooking here.

While Battle Creek always was home to a diverse population, we now have neighbors from around the world. In early years, we were a stop on the Underground Railroad; many freedom seekers chose to stay in Battle Creek, including Sojourner Truth. In 1999, the city dedicated Monument Park to Truth to commemorate her life and legacy. Today, the Sojourner Truth Institute is undergoing a rebirth, to create an educational and historical collection for our community. Already the Heritage Battle Creek Research Center houses one of the most extensive archives of Truth artifacts in the United States.

Our youth have the great opportunity to exchange culture, learning, and fun through a Sister City student exchange with Takasaki, Japan. For more than 35 years our students and our Japanese neighbors have celebrated this opportunity.

Today, we Believe in Battle Creek, and have a BCVision, which we will discuss in these pages. Our initiatives are moving us in the right direction, and we are excited about what the future holds for our community. We envision ourselves as a community for families, looking for a place where they can live, work, play, and thrive. While we have faced our share of challenges, we continue work to include all community sectors in tackling our most pressing problems.

PART III: Describe Civic Engagement in your Community

Within city government, it can be difficult to earn and keep the public trust. We want our neighbors to believe in us as much as we believe in them, so we have a strong focus on involving our neighbors in what we do, seeking their feedback where they are, showing them we are listening, and using that feedback in our decision-making.

Over the last few years, Battle Creek has developed a community vision that we share broadly, born from recent, ongoing projects for positive change. This includes making Battle Creek a thriving place where every person and family can have the income, education, and resources needed to succeed here. We tie this into our Believe in Battle Creek mantra, to emphasize the positive changes we make together.

Our BCVision community movement, discussed in more detail in Part IV, launched a door-to-door campaign at the start, when team members asked neighbors what they wanted to see in our community. The emerging themes were jobs, talent and culture of vitality, which became the three pillars of the movement.

BCVision strives to ensure marginalized neighbors have access to resources. That team has provided outreach at community events – more than 20 last year – and had a Community Engagement Team hold meetings in our neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods are key to much of what we do within city government; our residential geography forms eight Neighborhood Planning Councils – groups of neighbors who gather to discuss neighborhood issues. Formed by ordinance, the city provides NPC support by posting agendas, promoting meetings, and staff attendance to give presentations and help discuss neighborhood issues.

City Code, Police, Planning, Public Works, and other staff attend; some regularly, and some as needs arise. We hold quarterly leadership meetings for NPC officers, and recently held an educational event for those interested in learning more about neighborhood involvement.

The public can apply to our boards and commissions – we have boards for neighbors interested and experienced with historic preservation, planning, civil service, and youth, among others. We promote vacancies and meetings, and our Youth Advisory Board recently received a seat at the dais during City Commission meetings, to more publicly participate in discussions.

Our community responds to social media and our website, but also more traditional forms of participation and communication. During processes like our Planning Division master plan update, Community Development action plan updates, City Manager search, and Transit master plan, we hold multiple community meetings at different times, and pair that with survey opportunities. When we survey, we make it available online and mail it in our water bills, which distribute to about 20,000 households. We receive hundreds – and often more than 1,000 – responses with this combination.

Within city government, recently we have begun the work of reaching out to our English as a Second Language neighbors, hoping to help them better understand city government, and enable them to better participate. We believe in bringing neighbors to the table from the beginning, then actively listening. That is easier said than done.

Planning staff specifically invited Spanish-speaking neighbors to one of our Master Plan update public meetings, grouping those neighbors at the same table, with an interpreter. Our intention was to enable them to have a more meaningful discussion on city growth and development, but we learned afterward that they felt isolated and left out of the large group.

Hoping to learn more, and do better, staff met with community organizers who work with both our Hispanic and Burmese neighbors, an eye-opening experience. For example, staff learned that, to reach our Hispanic neighbors, we must form personal relationships first – joining them at their own events as neighbors, not government. We could cook with them, and talk about our families. If we do hope to see their eventual meeting and focus group participation, we

were encouraged to provide transportation and childcare, and offer refreshments, helping compensate them for the financial burden of potentially taking time off work to attend.

The resources to meet these expectations seemed daunting, and we have yet to move forward with them. Nonetheless, a lack of trust can come from a negative interaction or few interactions at all, so it helps to partner with trusted organizations and get involved in their existing events, as suggested above.

We attended an ESL civics class at such an organization in the Burmese community. Our city manager presented on local government, with an interpreter's help, answering many questions about government, an identified need in that segment of our community. We contributed to the curriculum, and got an audience, thanks to the organization's existing good reputation. They invited us back, and want us to present to larger audiences.

Our Police Department has attended conversations at Burmese churches, answering questions and providing information. City departments, generally, have begun sending staff to community events with trusted organizations across the community.

Last year, we held a free interpretation day at City Hall with our language services partner, a trusted organization in the local immigrant community. Unfortunately, it was not well attended, but the city was mentioned alongside our partner in promotional materials, in a positive light – highlighting our attempts to improve.

We have successfully completed some smaller projects, continuing these efforts. Meeting neighbors in their language is important logically, but also symbolically, showing our concern for their needs, and helping us answer their questions accurately. They can interact with our great staff, and we can build rapport and receive their feedback.

We created a work process for telephone translation services with our language services partner; we created a multi-lingual welcome sign at several of our facilities – including the series of Burmese dialects spoken here; and we added the local Spanish-language newspaper to our press list.

We find strength in numbers as we work together, and share data. We utilize community conversations often – public meetings on particular issues that we use to educate and gather feedback. The city government partners with other organizations with experience facilitating such conversations, and/or related to the topic at hand.

PART IV: Describe Three Community-Driven Projects

PROJECT ONE – Byrne Grant: Improving neighborhoods & reducing crime

CONTACT – Kelly Dillman, Community Outreach and Engagement Liaison, City of Battle Creek Police Department

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The city in late 2016 was awarded an Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant; the program honors late New York City Police Officer Edward Byrne, killed in the line of duty, and supports the criminal justice efforts of communities across the nation.

With this funding, Battle Creek has outlined an ambitious program. Our goal is “to significantly improve communication and connectedness between law enforcement, community-based organizations, and citizens, to collectively identify and influence the underlying conditions that foster violent crime [thereby] implementing strategies that ultimately result in a reduction of crime, and safer neighborhoods.” Our Police Departments leads this initiative, with support from our Community Services Department, and partnerships with several outside organizations.

Neighbors were involved from the start. During the planning phase, a local organization, iEval, led the research work. This team brought in national research and local data, generally around neighborhood crime, unemployment, poverty, homeownership, and single parents, to get conversation started at a “resident interpretation session.” There, neighbors were able to deepen their understanding of issues and provide their interpretations, posing new questions for additional data collection. New findings were brought back to the neighbors for additional contemplation, with direction toward priority areas of concern.

The Police Department identified hot-spot police grids with disproportionate amounts of Part I crimes (violence-related), and Part II crimes (like fraud, or drug-related), in addition to calls for service. This 1.7-square-mile geography is now the target area of interest.

In a second resident interpretation session, the Southwestern Michigan Urban League took over facilitation, with targeted questions about potential crime drivers. Conversations produced root causes, which were paired with the national research and local data. Root cause chains began to take shape.

At this stage, the research team began searching best practices for the root causes. Neighbors in the second interpretation session also identified local assets that could help address these issues. A strategic plan now was in the making, built upon meaningful, informed, and embedded neighbor engagement. Working with neighbors to interpret data led to robust and citizen-led ways of setting goals and determining local solutions to addressing drivers of crime.

The group identified specific root cause chains around foreclosures, rentals, lack of consistent police presence, landlord accountability, trust among neighbors, and home values. These chains were condensed into two broader drivers of crime – lack of trust, and disordered housing.

Lack of trust included the root causes of neighbors not knowing or trusting each other, and a lack of police presence. Neighbors felt a lack of intermingling. This lack of relationships means weak neighborhood watch, and few constructive activities to bring neighbors together. A lack of pride, and participation in community leadership opportunities also were discussed. Neighbors also felt a lack of police visibility, impacting perceptions of safety and felt influences from the national “us-them” climate. Solutions focused on casual and intentional non-enforcement interactions with neighbors.

Disordered housing included the root causes of landlord accountability paired with inconsistent code enforcement, as well as rental concentrations, foreclosures, and vacancies. Rental properties were a significant neighbor concern, due to renters’ transient nature, distant property owners, and different attitudes regarding the neighborhood. Non-compliance with existing housing codes also was discussed, as well as the impacts of blighted properties. The large number and concentration of rentals, foreclosures, and vacant buildings garnered attention. On top of that, youth loitered in those buildings, due to a speculated lack of meaningful engagement. Recommended strategies fixated around landlord

education, improving code enforcement, and engaging property owners, renters, and youth, while hoping to improve a sense of community.

These are the challenges this project will address. A slew of activities emphasizing neighbor engagement are under way. These activities maintain some flexibility to tackle unforeseen circumstances during a drive toward outcomes discussed later.

- Neighborhood Ambassador Program – This program is designed to build the capacity of neighbor participants with new and expanded leadership roles. Participants will help define and champion the work of the grant. Liaison roles are anticipated, as participants network with city staff and partners. They will assist with specific projects, while overall becoming more engaged in the neighborhoods. Youth specifically will be sought to participate.
- Resident Leadership Training – The training will involve discussions on what it means to be a leader. Presenters will introduce many leadership characteristics, challenge participants to think broadly about stakeholders, and emphasize gathering input from *all* stakeholders. Ambassadors, as well as neighbors generally in the hot-spot areas, will participate.
- Neighborhood Engagement, Assessment, and Triage (NEAT) Teams – NEAT teams aim to improve identification and assessment of neighborhood issues. Once stakeholders and information are gathered, the group will facilitate interventions, generally over three to six months. Teams will organize around an issue, and will include interested neighbors, ambassadors, city staff, partners, and other organizations.
- Learning-by-Doing (LBD) Grants – In order to kick-start neighbor engagement, the neighbor-led community building and intervention groups will be eligible to apply for a grant from the Byrne funds. The Battle Creek Community Foundation will oversee the allocation of these funds, and provide training sessions about the grant-making process, similar to their mini-grant program. Projects will be identified by the neighbors and, ideally, will pertain to root causes discussed in the planning phase. Youth-focused projects are an example.
- Neighborhood Action Plans – The issues and areas of priority will be identified throughout the work, and will be consolidated into Neighborhood Action Plans. Depending on the nature of the LBD grants, these issues and efforts also may be incorporated into formal city plans, like the Master Plan. This will keep change efforts coordinated and guided by plans to determine future resource expenditures, with timeframe goals of one to five years.
- “We Are” Pride Projects – Projects can cover social activities (like block parties), beautification projects, safety activities, or others to build connections between neighbors, particularly in small spaces. The activities also are eligible for grants administered by the Battle Creek Community Foundation. The goal is to develop or renew relationships and encourage interactions from a place of shared concern.
- Citizens Police Academy (increase participation) – This program brings community members in contact with police officers, to learn about each aspect of the department. During the 10-week program, participants can ask questions, and discuss challenges facing the community and law enforcement. Participants have the potential to influence police programs but, at a minimum, walk away more informed. The community outreach officer, hired through the Byrne Grant to execute projects, will explore ways to increase participation from the targeted areas.
- Police Explorer Program (increase participation) – This program provides an opportunity for police to interact with youth in non-enforcement situations. Department tours and hands-on training exercises culminate in a summer camp. Other sessions include the history of law enforcement, crowds, patrol procedure, traffic stops, and forensics. Youth develop a working knowledge of how the criminal justice system impacts our society. More

youth involvement from the target areas also will be explored.

- Increase number of foot patrols – Walking beats are shown to be more effective than random foot patrols. The grant affords the Police Department the ability to make adjustments to patrol assignments. Officers will be trained to better engage the community while on patrol. Patrols will focus on the most problematic areas at the appropriate times, as evidenced by local data. Four officers also have been assigned specific police grids to deepen the connection with neighbors. Emphasis is on tracking these informal conversations.
- Sidewalk Sessions – Relying on the community outreach officer for execution, the grant team plans to gather key stakeholders at the site of an incident and hold “sidewalk sessions.” Here, stakeholders may provide resources, give updates on investigations, listen to what neighbors have to say, and otherwise demonstrate that stakeholders care, in a visible way.
- Good Landlord Incentives Program – Landlords with multiple complaints or calls for service at their properties will be invited to a meeting with code compliance officials. Here, officials will reiterate responsibilities of landlords, the impact of non-compliance, as well as the incentives for acting responsibly. One such incentive will be public recognition at City Commission meetings of landlords who have improved their properties. Additionally, related staff will expand online mapping of crimes related to rental properties for increased community knowledge and awareness.
- Crime-Free Rental Housing Program – Code compliance will target unregistered and unpermitted rental properties to help landlords meet registration and permit standards.
- Cops in Front of Kids activities – The community outreach officer will facilitate opportunities to engage youth in non-enforcement situations. This may unfold in many ways, such as officers attending youth summer camps, or engaging with youth in volunteer work. The Police Department also has partnered with local organizations – New Level Sports and the Police Athletic League – to direct this activity.

Over the life of the Byrne Grant, our activities will direct toward these outcomes:

- Increase in neighbor leadership and engagement
- Improved physical appearance of neighborhoods through the specific neighbor-led projects
- Increased perception of safety in target areas
- Increase in neighbor engagement with crime prevention
- Increase presence of officers in the target area
- Increase neighbor perception of quality of housing and neighborhood safety
- Evidence of changes in property management patterns
- Increase in youth involvement and engagement in their own neighborhoods
- Increase in non-enforcement interactions with law enforcement

Statistics around these outcomes will be measured with the assistance of the University of Michigan School of Public Health, using pre- and post-surveys.

These outcomes are people-oriented. While there will be specific projects and information shared, this work is after growth and improved relationships between the people affected by these challenges. Yet it is our belief that these outcomes will manifest themselves long-term with decreases in indicators like rental housing code violations, conditions leading to blight, property crime, blight that facilitates crime, violent crime, and crimes involving youth.

Currently, police officers have begun integrating themselves around the community, improving their visibility and time spent proactively engaging with neighbors. Officers also have promoted neighbor engagement opportunities, including

the upcoming Byrne Grant activities. The leadership training curriculum has been shared with guidance from the Community Tool Box, a resource from the University of Kansas. Potential ambassadors also are being identified.

PROJECT TWO – Battle Creek Coalition of Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation

CONTACT – Rosemary Linares, TRHT Program Coordinator and Principal of Cross Movement Social Justice Consulting, Battle Creek Coalition for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation
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The Battle Creek Coalition for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation is designed to create a broad movement to collectively face issues of privilege, race, and bias in Battle Creek.

The entire movement was started by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, one of the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. It also happens to be based in Battle Creek.

The foundation worked with leaders across the country to develop the framework of this plan for change, launched in 2016. It is a comprehensive, national and community-based process to plan for, and bring out transformational and sustainable change, and to address the historic and contemporary effects of racism. It seeks to unearth and jettison the deeply held, and often unconscious, beliefs created by racism – the main one being the belief in hierarchy of human value.

These beliefs limit equal access to quality education, fulfilling employment, safe neighborhoods, equal housing opportunities, and quality healthcare – all things for which our community is striving.

The framework's foundational pillars are Narrative Change, and Racial Healing and Relationship Building. The other three areas are Separation, the Law, and Economy.

With Narrative Change, teams will consider how to create and distribute new narratives in entertainment, journalism, digital and social media, school curricula, museums, monuments, and parks, and in the way we communicate, which can influence people's perspectives, perceptions, and behaviors. With Racial Healing and Relationship Building, teams will focus on ways for all people to heal from wounds of the past, and build mutually respectful, intergenerational, and diverse relationships.

Separation examines how to address segregation, colonization, and concentrated poverty in neighborhoods. The Law involves reviewing discriminatory laws, and seeking solutions that will result in just application of the law. Economy involves studying inequality and barriers to economic opportunities, and recommending changes to create an equitable society.

WKKF in 2017 supported TRHT processes in 14 locations across the country.

In Battle Creek, the founding members work to engage community members in dialogue to broaden perspectives, build trust, and promote racial equity. Our group meets monthly, and is comprised of representatives of the Battle Creek Community Foundation, law enforcement, city administrators, and the Center for Diversity and Innovation, among others.

In the next six months, using the TRHT Framework as a guide, the Community Leadership Team will continue to collectively examine the problems caused by racism plaguing the community; recognize progress that already is under way; and identify potential allies who can engage in the TRHT process. Over the next four years, the coalition will continue to collectively examine the problems caused by racism plaguing the community, recognize progress that already is under way, and identify potential allies who can engage in the TRHT process.

The TRHT shared values are:

- Creating space that values and affirms the authentic engagement of local leadership, representing identities across all dimensions of difference, in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, language, immigration status, socio-

economic status, HIV status, gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, religion, faith, spirituality, age, or any other maker of difference.

- Seeking deeper connection, trust, and relationships, based on advancing racial equity.
- Sparking inspiration and motivation to change ourselves, this city, and this country, via the elevation of racial equity.
- Embracing vulnerability and discomfort in an effort to speak truthfully and honestly with each other, and to ourselves, to foster transformation.
- Local leadership from all levels, and across sectors, driving the priorities of this work.
- Valuing the contributions of all members and participants.
- Recognizing that this work is organic, and continually evolving.
- Using storytelling and data to illustrate our local history, and present-day impacts of race and racism in Battle Creek.
- Modeling and practicing actions that come from a place of love, understanding, and abundance.
- Standing on the shoulders of those who came before us, and who work alongside us, we aim to support all of Battle Creek's racial justice efforts.

The Battle Creek Coalition successfully organized two National Day of Healing events in January 2017 and 2018, in conjunction with the other TRHT locations across the country. This year's local event was a concert organized by WKKF. Nearly 1,200 students – from all five of our area high schools – attended, and heard a message of people coming together in unity and humanity. It was a celebration of leadership, and healing hearts.

Also this year, during the Jan. 16 event, our community saw their neighbors gathered at key intersections across the city, holding large heart cut-outs to remind everyone that love is the foundation for changing hearts and minds. The demonstration highlighted the importance of love, by engaging the heart of all people as a first step in working toward racial healing.

Throughout the spring of 2018, the local coalition is organizing multiple events, and inviting all community members to join together in generating a collective dream for promoting equity and eliminating racism in Battle Creek. The events kick off with a Friday-night Battle Creek film premiere of "Me, The 'Other'" on March 9 at the Kellogg Auditorium. The next day, March 10, the Community Leadership Team will host the first in a series of community convenings. The series will highlight two unique community spaces, and will be co-facilitated by different community leaders. The objectives of these meetings are for community members to:

- Grow a deeper sense of connection and relationships with one another, to collectively engage in a unique process for truth, racial healing, and transformation in the Battle Creek community.
- Gain a basic understanding of the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation framework, and local activities.
- Begin to collaboratively define a collective dream for promoting racial equity and eliminating racism in Battle Creek.
- Take action by joining the TRHT Action Teams.

Further into 2018, the Battle Creek coalition for TRHT will focus on:

- Building its membership, making this group representative of community members and different community sectors, across multiple racial and ethnic identities.
- Establishing a governance structure/partnership agreement that will lead to successful advancement of goals.
- Scheduling a series of Community Convenings for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation for the public to attend once a month. Participants will embark on a process to collectively define a vision for promoting racial healing and transformation in our community.
- Setting the foundation to initiate and/or support volunteer race dialogues within the community.
- Collecting data for the evaluation implementation.

PROJECT THREE -- BCVision

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How can we improve the City of Battle Creek? How do we close the employment gap, and help neighbors find and maintain full-time jobs, focusing on those with the greatest need? How can we ensure our earliest learners are prepared for kindergarten, and that all K-12 students have equitable access to receive a high-quality education? How do we prepare them for college and careers beyond high school?

How do we help aspiring entrepreneurs launch a small business? What resources do current business owners need to keep their doors open? How can we help neighbors with barriers to employment, and help large business owners realize those barriers, and work to improve them?

These are questions we ask ourselves daily – the questions that drive the work of BCVision.

BCVision launched in 2015 as a community-driven movement for change in Battle Creek. At the time, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Kellogg Co. met with local leaders, business, and neighbors to discuss how to spark transformation in Battle Creek, and improve economic conditions. Since then, these stakeholders have collaborated to create a vision and an actionable, long-term economic development plan that includes neighborhoods and community members who, historically, have had less access to resources that lead to prosperity.

We envision a thriving city where all neighbors can have the income, education, and resources they need to be successful. Project goals are to increase the number of local jobs, provide a top-notch education for our city's youth, and build a fun and friendly community where neighbors of all ages can thrive.

When the project began, those in the community ready to do this work asked simply, "How can we move our city forward?" Admittedly, it was a daunting task. The team quickly realized it had to first identify and understand the community's challenges, then work together as a community to find solutions, and take advantage of new opportunities.

Since the effort launched, the Steering Committee, Action Teams, BCVision supporters, and partnering organizations have worked hard to do just that. We have hosted many community meetings, knocked on more than 30,000 doors, and spoken with thousands of Battle Creek neighbors to receive input from as many people as possible. Hundreds of individuals, representing every sector in the community, have contributed.

We also sought outside industry experts to evaluate the information gathered and report out on where our community needs the most improvement. Those areas include racial equity, community engagement, and communication. The data helped shape the foundation for BCVision's shared vision and action plan.

We are tackling the most critical challenges facing Battle Creek's future, our three pillars –

- Jobs – Increase the number of permanent jobs, and Battle Creek neighbors with the skills and opportunity for employment.
- Talent – Build the talent pipeline by increasing college and career readiness, and kindergarten readiness.
- Culture of Vitality – Position Battle Creek as a place where people choose to live, work, and play.

The Steering Committee is comprised of members of the faith community, workforce and economic development, government, philanthropy, business, education, neighbors, and BCVision Action Team representatives. This group works to evaluate data, identify priorities, forge collaborations, and develop a structure for all neighbors to have an equitable opportunity to engage in the work; champion the effort broadly in the community; approve and review metrics; and hold Action Teams accountable for achieving goals and targets.

Focused on this work are our Action Teams, which meet monthly, and work toward goals specific to the three BCVision pillars. They engage a diverse group of neighbors to ensure the action plans are owned by and rooted in the community, and advance racial and social equity:

- College and Career Readiness
- Culture of Vitality
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Large Business
- Small Business
- Workforce Development

Our guiding principles are:

- Transform our community – Commit to community change for the benefit of all, with an emphasis on equity.
- Plan and work together – Involve key stakeholders across sectors; value and leverage community assets.
- Engage all community members as genuine partners
- Use shared data to set the agenda and improve over time
- Champion the cause – Be an ambassador for community change.

All work is measured using an equity lens to ensure efforts are centered on providing access to opportunities for all Battle Creek neighbors. Last year BCVision developed an equity statement as a guide:

We know, and will not ignore, the significant inequities in the Battle Creek Community.

Because we:

Believe in the infinite possibilities of individuals...

Believe that education is the great equalizer...

Believe that everyone has a right to financial stability...

We will:

Listen to, include, and act on the voices of the unheard.

Direct resources to where the need is greatest.

Break down barriers to employment.

We will be bold and act with a sense of urgency to improve people's lives in Battle Creek.

The Culture of Vitality team works to create a vibrant culture that supports job growth and talent development by positioning Battle Creek as a place where people choose to live, work, and play. Working toward safe neighborhoods, and expanding existing events, like Color the Creek – giving local artists space to create murals on buildings across the city – are important initiatives. Other impacts are Bruin Boo, in partnership with Kellogg Community College, and a chance for kids to experience time on a college campus at Halloween; canoeing and kayaking on the Battle Creek River, highlighting this natural resource; and International SummerFest, a celebration of the cultures in our community, which was greatly expanded last year.

Large Business is charged with creating jobs and ensuring a strong workforce is connected to those jobs. Last year, the group advanced work around three barriers to employment – high school diploma or equivalency, English as a Second Language, and technical training skills. The team collaborates with other Action Teams and community stakeholders to help increase awareness and availability of these resources. Another impact is development of a Manufacturing Consortium, due to conversations about needing greater connection to schools and other community resources.

Small Business has a mentorship program specifically to serve new women- and minority-owned businesses, giving them mentorship and support through their first year in business. The mentors are local business owners already seeing

success. This group also will launch a public data dashboard in 2018, create a resource guide mapping the small business/entrepreneurial ecosystem in the community, work to establish a fund and deploy \$50,000 into the community to focus on minority-owned business, and already launched an internship program with the Chamber of Commerce and Battle Creek Public Schools.

College and Career Readiness is working to ensure all students will be successful in pursuing careers and life paths that lead to economic stability. A recent New York University study pointed out that years of discrimination in the Battle Creek Public Schools system has resulted in enrollment declines, and budget and program cuts. Since learning these results, all four school districts in our community have worked together – meeting in the same room for the first time as a community – toward educational equity for our students. We want to prepare all students to succeed in college, careers, and life.

Kindergarten Readiness is focused on building a process to ensure every child in our community is developmentally on track, including ensuring quality early childhood experiences are accessible to all families. Last year, this group partnered with Great Start Collaborative and BC Pulse to launch a local shared-services alliance that builds the capacity for childcare centers to improve quality of care and fiscal strength. While data so far shows that these programs are helping children with the most needs score as well as the general population in kindergarten, inequity for those students returns after kindergarten. Long-term, this is an opportunity to determine why the underprivileged kids fall behind again.

Workforce Development is responsible for removing processes and barriers to employment, including improving access to transportation, creating career pathway partnerships, and engaging local employers with a pipeline of local, employable talent. Last year, this group organized employment and pre-employment prep fairs, launched a task force to study public transportation needs, and partnered with various stakeholders to obtain job training funds from the State of Michigan. Another important impact was to host a career and life expo, attracting 530 people looking for jobs and hope, with 83 employers talking to a diverse group of people. Additional job events are planned for 2018.

We are consistently working to ensure opportunities exist for all neighbors, and that equity is the foundation of our work. We are collaborating with community organizations to engage people of all races and ethnicities, and taking their feedback to inform our priorities and programs. We have seen a great deal of progress in these few years, and we know that harder work is still ahead of us. We still are committed to greatness, and we Believe in Battle Creek.