

INNOVATION | INCUBATION | ACCELERATION

Battle Creek has a long history of INNOVATION, INCUBATION AND ACCELERATION that continues today. This identity is in the fabric of who we are as a City. It's evident in our approach to food, aviation, social justice (Sojourner Truth!), health, and technology.

This once-in-a-lifetime investment in our City will not only allow us to stabilize our economy, but provides opportunity for BOLD action. Never again can we expect to see this level of investment and we would do well by our residents to encourage more innovative approaches to creating a city where folks want to live, work and play.

Today we have innovative partnerships that prove our ability to operate in this way - such as the City's partnership with Michigan State University to help create jobs and improve access to locally grown foods in Battle Creek by developing lasting partnerships between farmers, food businesses, and food system support organizations and the City's partnership with Battle Creek Public Schools to providing housing for teachers. Partnerships within our community such as the one between WMed and Grace Health prove our healthy appetite for innovation. We've been the place where ideas are formed and are provided space and resources to incubate – such as the Battle Creek Diaper Network and the Battle Creek Shared Services Alliance, both innovations brought to life locally that support families with young children. We, as many cities, encounter residents who take the initiative to start something - quieting the complaints of "nothing to do in BC" by actually doing something in BC. Examples include the Battle Creek Area Mustache Society, Cereal Killers Roller Derby, Battle Axe (Axe throwing), Color the Creek, Penetrator Events, Blvcksheep, FRDM City, Sound Diplomacy - just to name a few.

We propose that we fully embrace our identity as *the* place where INNOVATION, INCUBATION & ACCELERATION are celebrated, supported and prioritized. To make this proposal come alive, we recommend that we dedicate a portion of the Battle Creek ARPA dollars to be distributed (through an RFP process) to groups and organizations whose proposals improve our economy through INNOVATION, INCUBATION AND ACCELERATION.

This suggestion aligns well with our Priority Based Budgeting process that prioritized ECONOMY as the second most important issue residents would like to see resources allocated towards. Our goals of attracting and retaining a workforce that wants to live, work and play in Battle Creek will be well-served by embracing this identity and dedicating resources to encouraging and supporting this type of activity. Not only will it provide the City direction, but will undoubtedly spur young and old alike to play a role in bringing that energy to our community.

Document developed by: Commissioner Kristin Blood, Vice Mayor Kaytee Faris, Commissioner Boonikka Herring and Commissioner Kathy Szenda Wilson (August 2021)