

City of Battle Creek - American Rescue Plan Act

Recommended/potential projects

<u>City department</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost estimate</u>	<u>Why? How will I see this in the Battle Creek community?</u>
Airport	Airport operations support	396,000	Our airport has seen major expansions recently - the mission for the Air National Guard, facilities at Western Michigan University's flight school, and WACO's aircraft production business. Other expansions are in the works, and there is great potential for the Unmanned Aerial Systems market. We want to provide operating support, along with the BC Tax Increment Financing Authority, to put the airport in the best position to achieve success. There is potential to generate significant new jobs, and the spinoff benefits from such development should have a positive impact on the entire community.
City Hall facility	Building outside structure (terra cotta)	477,538	In the fall of 2017, a 750-pound section of terra cotta fell off City Hall, damaging a first-floor window and limestone bricks. An assessment found parts of the building required immediate attention, due to water damage of the steel supports holding the terra cotta façade in place. We have an obligation to the community and the U.S. Department of the Interior - City Hall is on the National Register of Historic Places - to maintain this building to the best of our ability. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a significant strain on the completion of this project; getting materials has been considerably more difficult. We also must complete this project for the safety of our visitors and employees. With this funding, we can complete the project in the 2022 construction season.
City Hall facility	Retaining wall	290,000	Our retaining wall system has been in place since the building was constructed 107 years ago. In the 1980s, we improve the finish and added drainage gutters. That drainage solution has since failed, and freeze/thaw problems are eroding the wall away. Ultimately, after presenting to the Historic District Commission in November 2017, the best solution is a replacement wall that closely resembles the historic wall, with a drainage system incorporated into our storm sewer system.
City Hall facility	Change public entrance to south side; improve first-floor offices - safety and accessibility	637,608	This project includes re-designing the layouts of both the Treasurer and Clerk office suites, to create an inviting atmosphere, and bring customers into the offices from the echoed hallway. The Treasurer's space allows for a one-stop shop for Treasurer and Utility Billing services. This eliminates the confusion people feel when doing business with these departments. These new designs will provide more accessibility, be customer friendly, easier to navigate, and provide safety barriers for staff.
City Manager	McCamly Hotel and plaza	2.5 million	Approved by the City Commission Oct. 19, 2021 - The former McCamly Plaza Hotel has a tough history and is not being used. The building needs many repairs, and multiple community groups are coming together to bring it back to local ownership, and the large tourism asset it has been. This is a need for our overall economy, drawing people to stay close to Kellogg Arena for events, and the new hotel will partner with Grand Valley State University to help teach hospitality management students.
City Manager	Broadband internet access	1 million	Access to high-speed internet is critically important for both work and school, particularly in the pandemic environment. Those without access can be left out of education and employment opportunities. Broadband is specifically called out as an eligible ARPA expense, and a high-priority item. We want to support the entire community, but with an emphasis on underserved areas. While we don't have a specific project yet, we hope to expand high-speed internet infrastructure to more of the community.
City Manager	Doliver building for affordable housing (135 N. Washington Ave.)	815,000	Approved by the City Commission Oct. 19, 2021 - We have to buy this property from the federal government to eliminate restrictions on development, and we fully commit to our wish for this property to serve the community with some type of affordable housing project. There is not yet a project identified for this property.
City Manager	Downtown parking support - Hinman/K2	500,000	The owners of the office building at the corner of McCamly and West Michigan downtown are looking at the conversion of nearly 130,000 square feet of office space to mixed-use housing. We want to collaborate with the development on parking, likely in the nearby Jackson Street parking lot. Supporting housing is critical to the success of the downtown, and making modifications to do so with city-owned parking facilities is a good way for the city to contribute. We expect that this project will help increase the number of people who both work and live in the city, support downtown businesses, and increase vibrancy downtown.
City Manager	Neighborhoods Inc. operating support	450,000	Our 2019 housing study talked extensively about the local need for a high-performing nonprofit agency with the capacity for single-family housing development and neighborhood revitalization. Neighborhoods Inc. has worked hard to make the changes necessary to be that nonprofit. They have new leadership, and new direction, and are positioning themselves to be a strong community development asset in Battle Creek. This funding would help them over three years to implement a service framework to help address many of the housing needs in our community. We expect many low-income families who are struggling with housing to benefit from this recommendation.

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City Manager	Downtown property purchase - CSE Morse	400,000	The city has a plan to naturalize the concrete channel portion of the Kalamazoo River through the south end of downtown. We would like to open up land south of Fountain Street in the lower mill pond area for recreation use, like walking paths and gathering spaces, as well as river access. We are already moving forward with some property purchase in that area, and want to help move one of only two remaining businesses on the site. River restoration and this associated park space will benefit the entire community by providing new and unique quality-of-life benefits, and allowing for environmentally beneficial use of the space.
City Manager	United Way of Battle Creek/Kalamazoo Region support	250,000	The United Way's Disaster Relief Fund supports critical basic needs and services, including raising and distributing money during emergencies. United Way supports response and recovery in instances of natural disaster and community crises that affect individuals and families below the ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) threshold. They have been critical in helping address the many negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This contribution would help replace funds spent over the last 18 months. Use of the funds will be focused on access to food, safe and quality shelter/housing, and access to health care.
City Manager	Kellogg Arena sports court	150,000	The arena holds many amateur sports events, and their related activities. These events are typically multi-day, family events that bring a flood of tourism dollars to our community, and contribute significantly to vibrancy in our downtown. To support events, we need to replace the aging sports court, a multi-use, temporary flooring well suited to a variety of events, like gymnastics – a sport where we have seen major growth in recent years. This will help us recover a major tourism component, and help us leverage dollars from out of town to create jobs, growth, and development.
City Manager	Diversity, equity, and inclusion officer	110,000	In 2021, we started an Equity Audit to review our work systems related to Human Resources and Police/community relations. We believe one of the outcomes of the audit will be the creation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer position to oversee the plan implementation, and guide our work, with intentional focus on racial equity.
City Manager	Assistant public information officer	100,000	There is a high level of community and city commission expectation that we engage neighbors in many ways. In 2013, the City created a Communications Specialist position, which was upgraded to Communications Manager in 2017 in recognition of the layers of coordination, collaboration with community stakeholders, and service as the city's Public Information Officer. The need to message and engage our neighbors is increasing exponentially, particularly as we respond and react to a global pandemic. An additional position is needed to keep up with our city's communications management, needs, and visioning.
City Manager	The Village initiative/Catalytic Community Giving	1.5 million	The Village is a collaborative effort and plan led by members of Battle Creek's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities to achieve equity and challenge systemic and structural barriers to their growth and prosperity. Developed around the theory of collective liberation, The Village intends to create systemic change driven by the belief that communities of color will achieve more through common goals and a united presence. The Village Reemergence Plan will create access and opportunity around economic development, industry, food, education, health and wellness, and personal growth and advocacy. The goals are 1) Promoting the healthy growth, learning, and development of children; 2) promoting strong families, and neighborhood stability; and 3) increasing access to economic development.
City Manager	Pay out city employee COVID-19 time off banks	60,000	Many city staff continued to provide services during the COVID-19 pandemic, in compliance with public health orders and during lockdown orders. Eligible employees received additional paid time off for their work during this time. We allowed those staff members to cash out a portion of their paid time off.
City Manager	Customer service, city organization culture, and diversity/equity/inclusion training	250,000	We will complete an Equity Audit in 2021 and 2022, and it will result in a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan for the city. We anticipate a component of that plan will be employee training in equity practices, and also customer service and organizational culture. We want to provide these opportunities so that our staff can provide the best service to every person in our community.
City Manager	Kellogg Arena support	370,000	The Cereal City Development Corp. team that manages Kellogg Arena and Festival Market Square operates key summer events like Vibe@5, Post Band concerts, and Food Truck Fridays, coordinates the Cereal Festival and Caribbean Fest, and provides key labor support to many of our parks and recreation assets. This helps fund entertainment venues and activities that were hardest hit by the pandemic.

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City Manager	Hotel/motel shared kitchen loans	775,000	Approved by the City Commission Oct. 19, 2021 - We anticipate an eviction crisis due to the pandemic, and we know families live in hotels/motels when they do not have other options. We want to help families staying long-term at hotels/motels, as we also work on affordable housing options. This will be a forgiveable loan program.
Communications	Community newsletter returns	36,400	Shortly after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, the city sent its last community newsletter. We also placed those on the website. Due to time and budget constraints during the pandemic, we have not released a general community newsletter since. Neighbors have told us that they do get information from our physical newsletter. We look forward to providing information again in this format.
Communications	On the Ground Battle Creek support	54,000	Second Wave/On the Ground embeds reporting teams in the city to tell great stories that might otherwise be missed. They tell stories of small businesses, neighborhood programs, and much more. The city is one of a group of agencies that contribute to this program financially, also including Calhoun County, Michigan Works!, and the Binda Foundation, among others. Due to the pandemic, we have not been able to contribute our portion of funds, and this would be for two years. We see the value to this storytelling, and look forward to additional programs planned for Battle Creek, including a focus on the youth voice.
Dept. of Public Works	Watkins Road culvert replacement and bank restoration	700,000	Replacement of the Watkins Road culvert crossing over Minges Brook, and eliminate bank erosion. This work will meet the city's final obligation with the county for the Big Marsh Drain District, to address property damage from storm flooding. We would restore the bank where erosion has caused tons of sediment per year to travel downstream.
Dept. of Public Works	Stormwater study	50,000	The area of Upton Avenue, Dickman Road, Angell Road, and Grand Trunk Avenue has long experienced flooding during intense storms. The cause of the flooding is linked to a large drainage area south of there. The proposed project will allow us to hire a consulting engineer to help understand the cause, solution, and cost to correct this long-standing problem.
Dept. of Public Works	Renovate/restore "Welcome to Battle Creek" wall and fountains	50,000	These city gateway structures were installed in 1997-1998, and need restoration. We need to do things like sealing the stones, as well as updating the in-ground lighting to LED, and waterproofing the fountain pools to continue greeting people as they enter Battle Creek from the south.
Dept. of Public Works	Renovate Sojourner Truth monument/amphitheater	50,000	The Sojourner Truth monument and amphitheater were created in 1999. With over 20 years exposed to the outdoor elements, these need in-depth restoration. This project will include replacement caulking, concrete repairs, hand rail refinishing, donor plaque restoration, LED lighting upgrades, and a new concrete finish on the columns and castings. We want the community and visitors to continue enjoying this historic park and monument.
Dept. of Public Works	Replace fiber internet line from City Hall to the Department of Public Works	25,000	We want to replace this line for future need that will support our city services to the community.
Dept. of Public Works	Install fiber line from Emmett Street to Roosevelt Avenue	40,000	This project would include all necessary fiber and hardware to extend the city's traffic signal fiber network from the intersection of North Avenue and Emmett Street to the intersection of North and Roosevelt Avenue. This connection will provide a more reliable, faster connection between the traffic signals, and could also provide for future opportunities, like Wi-Fi at Irving Park.
Dept. of Public Works	Public Wi-Fi in various parks	40,000	Whether it is for school, business, or pleasure, internet connectivity is no longer just an option. We can help provide this by extending the public Wi-Fi in the downtown to our more frequently used public park spaces. This project would include all fiber, hardware, and access points to provide public Wi-Fi to park areas like Anybodies Playground, Claude Evans Park, Piper Park, and Willard Beach.
Finance	Assistant budget officer	81,000	Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, two Finance jobs were eliminated. The city finance workload did not decrease, and our ARPA funds came with many compliance, reporting, and documentation requirements. Bringing back this job will fill a gap, and ensure the city is intentional about the documentation of ARPA fund expenditures.

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Fire	Address plumbing issues, including construction of PPE decontamination areas that separate toxic contaminates from living areas - all stations	150,000	Plumbing upgrades to all fire facilities will ensure code compliance within facilities that are over 100 years old (Station 2 built in 1903, and Station 3 built in 1902). Construction of PPE decontamination areas would separate toxic personal protective equipment from common living areas, helping support and protect our fire first responders as they serve the community daily.
Fire	Generator for Station 1	45,000	Fire stations operate 24/7/365, and generators provide necessary emergency power back-up in the event of power outages. Our current generators are outdated, and it is getting more difficult to maintain and find replacement parts for them. (Station 1, East Michigan Avenue; Station 5, West Michigan Avenue; Station 2, North Washington Avenue)
Fire	Generator for Station 2	20,000	
Fire	Turn-out gear extractors	25,000	The proper washing and drying of firefighting personal protective equipment significantly reduces the transmission of toxic substances to the human body. This in turn reduces the cancer risk among our firefighting personnel, keeping them safer, healthier, and better able to serve our community every day.
Fire	HVAC furnace at Station 2	15,000	We need to replace the furnace at our North Washington Avenue station, one of two stations over 100 years old. Our stations operate 24/7/365, and we must keep our firefighters safe and healthy, so they can continue serving the community every day.
Fire	HVAC return/duct work at Station 1	13,000	This is a needed improvement at our administrative station. Our stations operate 24/7/365, and we must keep our firefighters safe and healthy, so they can continue serving the community every day.
Fire	Address electrical issues - all stations	250,000	Our fire stations operate 24/7/365, and we want to make sure their electrical systems are safe, and up to code, especially with two stations over 100 years old (Station 2 on North Washington Avenue and Station 3 on Cliff Street).
Human Resources	HR technology upgrade - replacing Logos	450,000	
Human Resources	HR technology upgrade - replacing CivicHR	100,000	These two projects come with the same solution – a new Human Resource Information System. Since 2009 we have used the Logos database system to keep employment data. We currently use CivicHR for requisition management, job candidate workflow and applicant tracking. Logos and CivicHR have limitations that lead to inefficiencies, data duplication, and lack of reporting. An HRIS is designed to centralize all HR data, so that you can easily find employee information in one place without having to go through different data sets, spread sheets, and/or hard-copy files. We can avoid data duplication, and make changes for current staff and new staff, much easier and more efficient. This makes a better experience for everyone.
Human Resources	New physical filing system	100,000	The HR Department needs new filing cabinets and/or rolling racks. The filing cabinets we use now – to keep confidential employee information – are old and need repairs. We should also consider using fire-safe cabinets for protection of employment history. We would replace all the cabinets in the HR main office, and also put new cabinets in the HR basement storage. Our basement storage is cardboard boxes on shelves, which is a concern for potential water and fire damage. We want to always do our best to protect confidential and personal information.
Human Resources	Administrative assistant	60,000	Before 2018, we approved funding for an HR Administrative Assistant. Due to budget cuts, we haven't been able to fill the job. The HR Assistant role is important to the department as a whole because of its supporting nature. The individual in this role will be responsible for daily tasks that other staff take on now. This person will provide support to the Insurance/Loss Control Specialist. This will allow better service out of HR.
IT	Software system replacement for Finance, Human Resources, Utilities	1 million	Since 2009, we have seen major technology improvements in public sector software, including remote access, ability to accommodate electronic receipts and forms (kiosks), as well as process improvements. There are systems now on the market to better provide business intelligence tools needed to be more responsive to customers and taxpayers. Although the city continued to do business during the COVID-19 shutdown, there were many difficulties due to software limitations. New software will help us be more responsive to the public, and provide more seamless services.

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IT	Firewall purchase	162,550	We have identified purchasing a new firewall as a cybersecurity priority for the city. It would allow us to protect our backups, and will add a significant layer of protection from ransomware, a concern for all governments, businesses, and neighbors. The new firewall would also provide us: Threat ID Protection, which allows certain threats to be identified and acted on before they come into or leave our network; PANDB URL Filtering, which allows our users to safely use the internet without stumbling across known and suspected malicious sites; Wildfire Security, which allows protection against cyber attacks that are suspected of being an attack, but cannot yet be identified as such; and it also provides the mechanism for some of our remote workers to connect to the city network.
IT	Document management system	150,000	The city currently has no online document management system. We use paper systems in finance, utilities, and human resources. These paper systems can be roadblocks to customer service and efficiency. A document management system would integrate with our software in these departments, and would allow easier access to information, and more efficiencies, letting us serve the public quicker and better.
IT	Timekeeping system	100,000	This is another project that helps our city operate more efficiently. During the COVID-19 shutdown period, we saw the need to develop better electronic timekeeping and scheduling for our staff.
IT	Warranties for data center servers and storage	88,424	Adding additional years of warranty for our city data center will provide functionality updates, and protection on our equipment until the end of the equipment's life. The more we can protect and update our technology, the better it will help us serve our customers and community.
IT	Fiber optic network expansion	32,500	This project would help us address community gaps in high-speed internet. We could add up to 40 miles of additional fiber network in the city. This will help close the digital divide, and help keep children and adults alike connected educationally and professionally.
IT	Conference rooms virtual upgrade	100,000	Once our public meetings return in person, this project will ensure that our conference rooms have the right video and audio equipment to continue streaming meetings to social media, allowing for the continued engagement we have seen during the pandemic.
Dept. of Public Works - parking	Hamblin/Jackson parking structures – joint replacement	300,000	We own three downtown parking structures (Hamblin, Michigan, and Jackson), which are operated by a private firm - ABM. In 2019 we contracted with outside engineers to do a detailed inspection, and develop a list of necessary improvement projects to maintain these parking structures. The final report included four separate recommendations, and this is one of those. We want to maintain a positive parking experience for our community, and keeping up the structures is part of that.
Dept. of Public Works - parking	Hamblin parking structure - façade repair	250,000	We own three downtown parking structures (Hamblin, Michigan, and Jackson), which are operated by a private firm - ABM. In 2019 we contracted with outside engineers to do a detailed inspection, and develop a list of necessary improvement projects to maintain these parking structures. The final report included four separate recommendations, and this is one of those. We want to maintain a positive parking experience for our community, and keeping up the structures is part of that.
Dept. of Public Works - parking	Hamblin/Jackson/Michigan parking structures – structural repairs	225,000	We own three downtown parking structures (Hamblin, Michigan, and Jackson), which are operated by a private firm - ABM. In 2019 we contracted with outside engineers to do a detailed inspection, and develop a list of necessary improvement projects to maintain these parking structures. The final report included four separate recommendations, and this is one of those. We want to maintain a positive parking experience for our community, and keeping up the structures is part of that.
Dept. of Public Works - parking	Hamblin/Michigan parking structures – coatings	175,000	We own three downtown parking structures (Hamblin, Michigan, and Jackson), which are operated by a private firm - ABM. In 2019 we contracted with outside engineers to do a detailed inspection, and develop a list of necessary improvement projects to maintain these parking structures. The final report included four separate recommendations, and this is one of those. We want to maintain a positive parking experience for our community, and keeping up the structures is part of that.
Police	Wellness program for officers/spouses - 3-year commitment	180,000	Daily our police first responders are exposed to all forms of trauma, and they absorb, and often retain, the impacts of it over time. In a recent study, first responders are exposed to over 900 traumatic events in their career. Unlike an obvious work-based injury, which our city has a comprehensive program to address, there is a lack of a similar approach when it comes to the preventative and holistic health of our first responders. This would help address their mental wellness, allowing healthy officers to continue serving the community every day.

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Police	Dictation software - initial license purchase	68,400	This system specializes in understanding the vocabulary of a particular profession. It is very much like Alexa or Siri, but designed to understand the vocabulary used in law enforcement. Currently, officers dictate into a recorder, transcribers in records type out those dictations, officers edit and submit to their supervisor. This process could take 4-7 days. We would like to cut that time down to at least a two-day process, helping us be more efficient as we serve the community daily.
Police	SPIDR Tech victim connection system	24,300	This is a customer feedback and notification software for our 911 calls for service. We would like to know, as real-time as we can, which parts of the city we are serving well, and where we need to improve our performance. This type of data gathering is missing from our current operation. We would not use this for all calls. This would be a tool to help us improve the way we serve the community every day.
Recreation	Air conditioning at Full Blast	600,000	Our Full Blast building is open every day, and hosts a wide variety of recreation programming, athletic events, Kidventure Summer Camp, and community gatherings. It features a fitness center, restrooms, locker rooms, indoor walking track, three large gyms, batting cages, and two multi-purpose spaces, as well as staff offices. We average over 1,200 rentals each year, and 92,000 visits. For numerous years, the cooling equipment located over the gymnasiums has not worked properly. Replaced equipment will allow us to run our programs in a way that is enjoyable, safe, and healthy for our community.
Recreation	Flash Flood Water Park pool resurfacing	200,000	Flash Flood Water Park is open from Memorial Day-Labor Day. It features two 200-foot water slides, zero-depth-entry pool, a water playground, and other activities. We serve close to 30,000 visitors per season. Especially after our Michigan winters, we must repair the pool floor before we open each spring. Resurfacing the entire pool would help eliminate smaller repairs costing thousands of dollars each year, so we can provide a great pool to the community.
Recreation	Flash Flood Water Park refresh	60,000	The Calhoun County Visitors Bureau gave Full Blast a grant to help repaint the water slides in 2020. With a fresh coat of paint on the slides, the other items at the park show their age and damage. New lounge chairs, patio dining tables, dining chairs, landscaping around the pool, and resurfacing of the water feature in the shallow area would greatly improve the overall appearance and safety of the water park.
Recreation	Bailey Park electrical/plumbing/lighting	300,000	Bailey Park has more than 80 acres, and features three full-sized baseball stadiums, two quadra-plex softball/baseball diamonds, four sand volleyball courts, two playgrounds, 12 shuffleboard courts, and the Home Run Dog Park. The parking lot lighting is limited, and presents a safety issue, as events often finish after dark. Upgrades will provide better safety, and better electrical efficiency. If costs allow, all disconnects on the poles on the softball fields (32 of them) need to be replaced; ballasts need to be lowered from the top of the poles to an area so they can be better reached for repairs; all softball and baseball field lighting needs to be replaced with LED lights; and fixtures in the concourse of C.O. Brown Stadium need to be upgraded. This improvements will make this great park asset safer and more enjoyable for all.
Utility Billing	Payoff utility accounts receivable	1.6 million	This would be direct help for our utility customers. The total balance owed by all customers as of June 30, 2021 is \$1.9 million, so this payoff would help most of our customers. We know many neighbors have struggled in various ways during the pandemic, and want to help with utility bills in this way.
Wastewater (Dept. of Public Works)	Repair No. 6 final clarifier	2.1 million	Our Wastewater Treatment Plant has a limit to how much wastewater we can treat, which is directly connected to the amount of treatment equipment we use. If our No. 6 final clarifier is not repaired, we cannot include it in this treatment, and that would reduce the amount of wastewater we treat. We want to continue this daily service to the city, so that we can discharge clean water into the Kalamazoo River.