

**City of Battle Creek Focus Group**  
**November 16, 2009**  
**10:00 A.M.**  
**Economic Development**

<b>Strengths &amp; Opportunities</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>	<b>Weaknesses &amp; Threats</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>
Food safety: peanuts, food protection. Training standards: \$35 million in Education, Protection & Training, 220 people, 28 states trained in 2009 Goal 2010: 2,000 people 2011 +: 3,000 – 5,000 people per year	5	Limited capital available from lending institutions	4
Downtown Transformation Strategy Battle Creek Unlimited: \$85 million, Public and Private Partnership 1. Food protection 2. Kellogg Foundation – more downtown focus 3. Education – math and science 4. Major investment in streetscape strategy	2	Not capitalizing on Sojourner Truth history/Heritage & Tourism	4
Good start with small businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro business SBTBC</li> </ul>	2	Older buildings lack infrastructure – no elevators, code issues	1
Historic Buildings – tax credits	2	Number of school districts	1
Diversity of Companies	1	College Prep	1
Proximity to I-94 and I-69 & Railroad access	1	Stimulus money only used for demolition	
Vacant Buildings – renovation		Planning lacks vision – need to take it to the next level	
Battle Creek Public/Private Partnerships		Cohesive Plan needed vs. lots of individual plans	
Willing to be creative		Lack of Funding	
Vacant Inventory		Entrepreneur culture	
Creative financing		Existing cafeterias inside large businesses hurt small downtown restaurants	
Innovation		Need more venture funding	

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Fort Custer Industrial Park		Too much commercial sq. ft.	
Downtown is manageable		Inferiority Complex	
Volunteerism		Blight in downtown	
Kellogg, Post, etc.		Drop-Out rate	
Organizational Network		Infant Mortality	
Support for local restaurants in downtown		Teen Pregnancy	
State Tax credits			
Kingman Museum			
WK Kellogg airport – 10,000 ft. runways			
Binder Park Zoo			
Local Foundations			
Battle Creek Unlimited – new tech “MAC” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment funds</li> </ul>			
Land Bank Authority			
United Solar Ovanics			
Large land mass –available development			
Brownfield and Greenfield Sites			
Aggressive for Economic Development			
City supports tax abatement			
Natural Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River</li> <li>• Linear Park</li> </ul>			

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Amateur Sports			
Family Environment			
Two accredited Community Colleges			
Health Care			
Number of school districts			
Legacy Scholars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College readiness</li> <li>• Scholarship</li> </ul>			
Young Professional Group			

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<b>Blight</b> (Heritage Towers)  (\$50 Total)	Micro Enterprise \$12 Rehab \$13 Demolition \$10 Micro-credit Code Enforcement \$8 Acquisition	Housing for student/young professors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May fit low/moderate</li> <li>• Senior/empty nester</li> <li>• Apartments</li> </ul>	\$3
		Food safety spin-off businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put in downtown</li> </ul>	\$4
		Clean window fronts downtown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No program now</li> <li>• Absentee landlords</li> </ul>	
<b>Young adults/Young Professionals</b>  (\$11 Total)		Downtown Transition Plan	\$5
		Young Professional Group	\$6
		Student Volunteerism through Community Colleges	
<b>Small Business Entrepreneur</b>  (\$9 Total)	Micro Enterprise \$4 Planning and Capacity Building Special Economic Activities Center for Entrepreneurship	Education, Training, Counseling and Operating	\$2
		Improve Streetscape	
		Rehab of old building (blocks)	
		Downtown incubator (focus on entrepreneurs)	\$3
		Preservation Trades Training	

**City of Battle Creek Focus Group**  
**November 16, 2009**  
**1:30 P.M.**  
**Homelessness**

<b>Strengths &amp; Opportunities</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>	<b>Weaknesses &amp; Threats</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>
A lot of resources and agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haven</li> <li>• Charitable Union</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Dish Inc. – Daytime Drop-in Center</li> <li>• Salvation Army</li> <li>• Homeless Service Coalition</li> <li>• Greater Battle Creek/County Homeless Coalition</li> <li>• Ten year plan to reduce homelessness (TCC)</li> <li>• Summit Point (mental health initiative)</li> <li>• Silverstar Apartments (Vets)</li> <li>• MI Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative</li> <li>• Community Health Connections</li> <li>• Family Health Center</li> </ul>	3	Economy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereal</li> <li>• Automotive</li> <li>• Industrial Sector</li> </ul>	2
Educational/system is flexible to meet diverse needs	2	Lack of Living Wage jobs	2
Volunteerism	1	Lack of affordable, safe and decent housing	1
The Veteran’s Administration		Drug Abuse	1
Diversity		Unskilled work missing	1
Community is Teachable		Rules of old systems can’t accommodate all homeless or all needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some are one sickness away</li> <li>• Lots of check cashing places</li> </ul>	1
Secondary Education (4-5 Colleges)		The V.A. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health</li> </ul>	
Youth programs/mentoring		Public Transit Access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs</li> <li>• Services</li> <li>• Groceries</li> </ul>	
		Lack of Day Care	

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Strengths & Opportunities	Priority Points	Weaknesses & Threats	Priority Points
		GED class flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of classes/test</li> </ul>	
		Lack of living wage jobs	
		Health Department	
		Jobs loss	
		PTSD/mental health issues	
		Former criminals	
		Lack of affordable child care	
		After-hours public transportation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs</li> <li>• Groceries</li> <li>• Services</li> </ul>	
		White Collar are taking Blue Collar jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Collar are taking Fast Food/Meijer Jobs</li> <li>• Many part time jobs do not offer Health Care</li> </ul>	
		Snowball effect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance, car, benefits, utilities, etc.</li> </ul>	

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Drug Abuse (\$8 Total)	Emergency Shelter Public Services Demolition	Haven housing/substance abuse program in shelter (homeless previous) Emergency Shelter Program Substance Abuse Council In schools	\$3 \$5
Affordable, Safe & Decent housing (income-based) (\$7 Total)	Rehabitation Construction of Housing Homeownership Assistance Relocation Assistance Code Enforcement	Lakeview General Hospital (old) Vacant deteriorating Credit repair programs So you can qualify Down payment assistance Case management for housing Teach people to keep housing Silver Star Rehabilitation Program MSHDA voucher/training program	\$2 \$3 \$2
Unskilled work force (\$5 Total)	Public Services Interim Assistance Micro-Enterprise Special Economic Activities	Job training Employer survey re: minimum qualifications Funding for felons, etc. for higher education Day care Public transit for odd hours and night shift	\$5
Lack of Living Wage Jobs	Special Economic Activities Micro-Enterprise		

**City of Battle Creek Focus Group**  
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**3:30 P.M.**  
**Health Care, Education and Social Services**

<b>Strengths &amp; Opportunities</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>	<b>Weaknesses &amp; Threats</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>
Great Community Resources – RHA Registered Health Alliance	6	Maternal/Infant health	4
Collaboration with other agencies	5	Crime Issues and Support Services	4
Commitment to education/youth Arts council – scholarship, Professional development for teachers	4	Reduced Living Wage Opportunities	4
Food Safety Training	2	Substandard housing funding/programs	2
History of Battle Creek: Health and Wellness	2	Need Increased employment opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability to new businesses to hire locally</li> <li>• Local businesses coordination with Schools</li> </ul>	2
Scholarship programs – number of agencies, community foundations, & relationships	2	Loss of educational funding for activities & services	1
Youth Agencies	1	Transitional Leadership in Community	1
Math & Science Center	1	Inability to Access Services via Transportation	1
Alliances – Family Health Center		Perception of Downtown Image	1
Working towards same goals		Cuts in State Funding	1
Right size town		Infant Mortality and Teen Pregnancy	1
Brand (Kellogg/Post)		Economy and available funding	
Share of Information		Plugged into Relationships – Access	
Local Best Practices (e.g. RHA)		Lead Based Homes/Health Risks	
Infrastructure		METH contaminated housing units	

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Access to Education		General Community Apathy	
Food Protection, Security, Research and Training		Fragmentation of Services	
Great Place to raise a family		Crime Prevention	
Living Wage		Agencies at capacity	
VA Center		“Danger” – perception of being downtown	
Green City Bike Path		Job training/higher education	
Legacy Scholarship		Competition	
Battle Creek Unlimited		Workforce retraining funding	
		Lack of Day Care and Transportation	
		Income Levels	
		Job Choices	
		Lack of Educational workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local residents</li> </ul>	

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**Health Care, Education and Social Services**

<b>Need</b>	<b>Eligible Activity</b>	<b>Program &amp; Projects</b>	<b>Priority \$</b>
Lack of Educated Workforce  (\$34 Total)	Special Activities Microenterprise Public Services Special Economic Activities	Develop wind energy sector Center for Entrepreneurship Keep kids in school Tailor Community College Programs to needs of community Adult learner (26 – 50 years old) education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it easier to go back to school</li> </ul> New Level sports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring/mentoring with sports</li> </ul> Elevate academic expectations of districts Economic development and transition from service industries Offer variety of secondary options besides college (vocational training)	\$10 \$8 \$16
Maternal/Infant Health  (\$31 Total)	Public Services Loss of Rental Income ESG Code Enforcement Affordable Housing Special Economic Activities Planning and Capacity Building	Substance Abuse Prevention Program Teen Pregnancy Education Access to Health Care Nurse Family Partnership Program Better prenatal care – two years Health-Wellness program	\$2 \$15 \$14
Crime Issues  (\$27 Total)	ESG Demolition Affordability housing Public Services Relocation Micro Enterprise	Education of Community Cost: \$3,000 Substance Abuse Prevention – \$30,000 Prison Skill Training Jobs for Youth Summer programs Transitional Housing Faith Based Programs Expungements Women's Coop	\$5 \$12 \$5 \$5
Public Transit  (\$0 Total)		Walkability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning sidewalks</li> <li>• Many sidewalks in disrepair</li> <li>• Kids, other use often</li> </ul>	
		Accessibility to scholarship dollars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to know about it</li> <li>• Fill out forms</li> <li>• To be addressed by local college access network</li> </ul>	

**City of Battle Creek Focus Group**  
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**6:30 P.M.**  
**Neighborhoods and Housing**

<b>Strengths &amp; Opportunities</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>	<b>Weaknesses &amp; Threats</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>
Quality homebuilders	7	Poor Infrastructure	5
People care about community	6	Crime Rate	5
Food safety business	4	Business regulations and tax structure	4
New City Commission – City Resident cooperation	3	Local contracts	3
Amount of foreclosed properties	3	Unemployment	3
Variety of small business	2	Youth flight (“Brain Drain”)	2
Experience and knowledge of residents	1	City decisions made in a vacuum	2
Young professional housing in CBD potential	1	Existing downtown housing stock	2
Community’s History	1	Housing Availability	1
Corporate Sponsors	1	Consistent and enforced code enforcement	1
Foundation funding	1	Youth outreach	1
Dept. of Human Services Pilot Program		Density in certain Areas of City	1
Good spurs – retail and industry		State Government support	
Code Enforcement		City/resident communication	
Housing Availability		Lack of engaging resident knowledge	
Average Housing price to Household income		City Image	
I-94		Status quo	
Public Safety		Speeding and Petty crimes	
Motivated Leadership		Large geographic area to service	
Willing to think outside the box		Lack of collaboration of agencies	

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		Location between Detroit & Chicago	
		Combine public safety	
		Poor licensing of builders	
		Number of demo properties and lead removal costs	
		EPA regulations	

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<b>Need</b>	<b>Eligible Activity</b>	<b>Program &amp; Projects</b>	<b>Priority \$</b>
Neighborhood Enhancements & Improvements  (\$49 Total)	Public Services Rehabilitation Disposition Clearance Activities Interim Assistance Relocation	Tax abatement and purchase price <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education &amp; Teaching</li> </ul> Relocation Greenfields \$1 house purchase program City pre-inspectors program Code Enforcement Lease to Own program Mentor program Homeownership training Communication of available funding Timeliness Establish Neighborhood Centers	\$11   \$3 \$20  \$15
Housing Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choice</li> <li>• Rental units/ properties</li> <li>• Home Ownership</li> <li>• Affordability</li> <li>• Loss of rental income</li> <li>• Loss of Value</li> </ul> (\$45 Total)	Public Service Home Ownership Assistance Rehabilitation ESG Code Enforcement Acquisition	Increase Code Enforcement Improved Code Enforcement Land Bank improvements Construction training Environmental Awareness & Protection Reduce Density Home ownership training program Community Action Weatherization Program Construction trades	\$30     \$15
Crime rate  (\$26 Total)	Public Services Demo Code Enforcement Special Economic Activity Rehabilitation Acquisition & Relocation Micro-Enterprise	Community Policing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code Enforcement</li> </ul> Foot/Bike Patrol Demolition Habitat for Humanity Deconstruction Environmental cleanup Recycling Historic Preservation Housing refurbishment program Rental Housing/Landlord Ordinance	\$5  \$16     \$5
Poor infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streets</li> <li>• Pathways</li> <li>• Utilities</li> <li>• Water &amp; sewer</li> </ul> (\$5 Total)	Public Facilities Improvement Interim Assistance Special Activities Planning & Capacity Building	Road resurfacing Sidewalk repairs ADA Ramps Cub & Gutter Lighting Lead pipe replacement	\$5

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**“Open Discussion”**

<b>Strengths &amp; Opportunities</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>	<b>Weaknesses &amp; Threats</b>	<b>Priority Points</b>
Renovation of Historic Buildings	3	Blight	6
Older Neighborhoods	3	Animosity “Us vs. Them” Battle Creek vs. “Lakeview”	4
Colleges/School District	3	Brain Drain	2
Diversity	2	Underutilized Parks	1
Foundations	2	Competition w/Beckley Road Commercial	
A lot of enthusiasm in City	1	Dead zones for technology	
Youth Challenge Program	1	Fragmented Identity	
Entrepreneurship	1	Too many School Districts	
Concentrated Business Core		Boundaries	
Affordable Houses		Travel Distance to jobs and to services	
Identification w/Neighborhoods		2 <sup>nd</sup> Largest City Geographically in MI	
Walkable Downtown		Need more Green Spaces	
Multiple Retail Centers		Safety Perception	
Cultural Organizations		Crime Rate (perception)	
Bike Lanes		Cut Funding Availability	
Easy to live in Battle Creek			
Dog friendly opportunities			
Military presence			

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Blight  (\$38 Total)	REHAB Code Enforcement Clearance Activities Homeowner’s Assistance CBDO’s Rental Income Neighborhood Revitalization	Retro Zoning Code Enforcement Playground Improvements Habitat and Neighborhood Inc. Rehabilitation Purchase and Renovation Programs	\$18 \$7 \$3 \$5 \$5
Crime Rate  (\$17 Total)	Code Enforcement Public Facilities Special Economic Activities Program Administration Costs Public Services Micro-Enterprise	Job Creation Lighting Job Training Mentoring Programs	\$5  \$3 \$9
Brain Drain  (\$14 Total)	Micro-Enterprise Capacity Building Acquisition Interim Assistance Special Economic Activities	Job Creation Job Training Education Opportunities Earn, Learn and Play	\$7   \$7
Us vs. Them  (\$11 Total)	Micro Enterprise Relocation Special Economic Activities Special Activities Clearance Activities Public Services Affordable Housing	Community Wide Programs Conservation Work Projects Street Improvements Real Estate Training	\$3 \$5 \$3