



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

# Public Spaces Community Places

Building Vibrant Communities Across Michigan



**PUBLIC SPACES  
COMMUNITY PLACES**

**Patronicity**







TULIP CITY WALLS MURAL FESTIVAL 2025

# Table of Contents

- 3 ABOUT PUBLIC SPACES COMMUNITY PLACES
- 4 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS
- 6 GROUNDBREAKING PUBLIC SPACES
- 8 UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND ACCESSIBILITY FUNDING EXTENSION



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

## About the Michigan Economic Development Corporation

The mission of the [Michigan Economic Development Corporation](#) (MEDC) is to achieve long-term economic prosperity for Michiganders by attracting and developing people, cultivating and revitalizing places, and competing for and winning projects.

The MEDC works to create and grow vibrant, diverse, and resilient communities across Michigan by providing economic development services and programs to attract and retain talent in Michigan communities.







NTN RAGING RIVER TRAIL



PLYMOUTH OUTDOOR PICKLEBALL COURTS



SHINE BRIGHT SAGINAW MURAL PROJECT

## About Public Spaces Community Places

Thriving places help define a community's economic vitality. From bike trails and pocket parks to public sculpture projects, public spaces contribute to a strong quality of life, help attract and retain talent, and strengthen local economies. Public Spaces Community Places is dedicated to building vibrant communities.

Launched in 2014, [Public Spaces Community Places](#) (PSCP) is a placemaking crowdgranting program created by the [MEDC](#) in partnership with the [Michigan Municipal League](#) (MML) and [Patronicity](#). As the **first program of its kind in the country**, PSCP has been recognized by the International Economic Development Council for excellence in economic development.

## How It Works

**The program uses donation-based crowdfunding to generate public support and funding for developing or revitalizing public spaces. The program creates active, well-utilized community places.**

Communities, nonprofits, and municipalities are eligible to launch crowdfunding campaigns through Patronicity, a Detroit-based civic crowdfunding platform that administers the program. Patronicity provides one-on-one coaching throughout the campaign process and assists the MEDC with grant management, including project approval, fund disbursement, and reporting.

Community-led placemaking projects that successfully reach their crowdfunding campaign goal receive a matching grant from the MEDC of up to \$50,000, or \$75,000 for universally accessible projects.

Since 2014, the MEDC has invested \$14 million in public space through the program.

The crowdgranting model requires projects to build awareness through community engagement and to earn community support. Projects engage residents in achieving place-based improvements and instill community pride as they invest in creating or preserving local landmarks that will serve their community for years to come.

**Do you have an idea for a new public space in your community?**

**Visit [patronicity.com/puremichigan](https://patronicity.com/puremichigan) to learn more and get started.**

# Impact by the Numbers

This report highlights projects funded during Fiscal Year 2025.

## Total Crowdfunded



**\$1,552,075**

2025

**\$16,999,371**

LIFETIME

## Total Matched



**\$1,325,000**

2025

**\$14,763,068**

LIFETIME

## Total Projects



**31**

2025

**421**

LIFETIME

## Total Patrons



**3,970**

2025

**77,002**

LIFETIME

## Total Square Feet

PUBLIC SPACE CREATED OR REDEVELOPED



**1,180,498**

2025

**25,992,369**

LIFETIME

**8**

UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC SPACES

**97% Success Rate**

**\$12,772,729**

LEVERAGED FUNDING

**10.47:1**

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT RATIO

For every \$1 invested by the MEDC,  
\$10.47 was invested privately.

**\$14,324,804**

TOTAL PROJECT INVESTMENT (TPI)  
CROWDFUNDING AND LEVERAGED FUNDING



**\$45,161**

AVERAGE GOAL

**\$50,067**

AVERAGE RAISE

**128**

AVERAGE PATRONS

SMALLEST CAMPAIGN GOAL

**Majestic  
Riverview Park  
had the smallest  
crowdfunding  
campaign goal of  
\$10,000.**

HIGHEST RAISE

**Ford Field  
Playground  
for the Future  
had the highest  
crowdfunding  
campaign raise  
of \$85,569.**

LARGEST NUMBER OF PATRONS

**City Square  
Park had the  
largest number  
of patrons, with  
460 contributing  
to the campaign's  
success.**

## Project Creators by Entity Type

55% NONPROFITS  
45% MUNICIPALITIES

SMALLEST COMMUNITY

**Byron  
Population:  
545**

LARGEST CITY

**Detroit  
Population:  
639,111**

**9**

NEW COMMUNITIES  
PARTICIPATED IN PSCP  
FOR THE FIRST TIME

**\$72,389**

MICHIGAN MEDIAN  
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**\$59,524**

AVERAGE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME OF PROJECT LOCATIONS

**70%**

OF PROJECTS TOOK PLACE  
IN COMMUNITIES WHERE THE  
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
WAS AT OR BELOW THE STATE'S  
AVERAGE



# Groundbreaking Public Spaces

Explore a few of Michigan's newest public spaces.

## The Brand New Besser Museum

ALPENA, MICHIGAN

CROWDFUNDED: **\$37,435**

CROWDGRANTING MATCH: **\$35,000**

POPULATION: **10,197**

PATRONS: **54**

The Besser Museum launched a crowdfunding campaign in 2024 to create an interactive regional history exhibit. The Discover Northeast Michigan History Exhibit, completed in 2025, transformed outdated exhibit space into an experience that takes visitors from the Big Bang to Big Industry, providing opportunities to learn about Northeast Michigan's rich heritage in a stimulating, family-friendly environment. The museum now features a climbing wall in the Ice Age exhibit, a milkable cow in the Farming exhibit, a digitally animated map of Michigan, and more! The successful crowdfunding campaign and matching grant provided the final funding for the \$1.8 million exhibit.

"We were really impressed with the new Discover Northeast Michigan History Exhibit! We are so fortunate to have an experience like that in our community. My kids really liked the interactive pieces, and we all couldn't stop looking at the Alpena table map. I so much appreciate the hands-on interactive approach."

– Sarah B.

[Learn More](#)



## 2025 Pleasant Peninsula Mural Festival

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

CROWDFUNDED: **\$44,712**

CROWDGRANTING MATCH: **\$37,500**

POPULATION: **198,917**

PATRONS: **212**

Pleasant Peninsula supports and fosters the conservation, biodiversity, and education of Michigan ecology through public art. With support from the MEDC, the 2025 festival installed 21 murals, each featuring one of Michigan's endangered species, informed by the research of environmental educators. The festival celebrated art and ecology, featuring live music, food, speakers from local conservation organizations, 50+ vendors, and educational opportunities, attended by over 2,500 community members.

"I never could have imagined what a festival themed around conservation and endangered wildlife would even look like, but this has exceeded every single one of my expectations, and there are way more people here than I ever thought was possible. Everyone is here having fun being a part of the conservation community together."

– Jesse L.

[Learn More](#)





# Unified Civic Monuments Project

BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN

CROWDFUNDED: \$52,701 CROWDGRANTING MATCH: \$50,000

POPULATION: 9,103 PATRONS: 149

The Unified Civic Monuments Project established two monuments by artists David Alan Clark and Harold Woodridge, honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and fostering a connection between the twin cities of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph. This was a collaborative effort between the African American History & Literature Gallery, Krasl Art Center, and Lake Michigan College, with additional support from the BH/SJ Arts & Culture Social Justice Group and the two cities. The monuments bookend the Unity Trail, spanning the St. Joseph and Paw Paw Rivers, symbolically uniting the communities. The project, completed in fall 2024, is a reminder of the transformative power of unity and encourages community members to walk together in the fight for justice.

“The monuments have provided a perfect space to learn more about the Civil Rights movement and the legacy of Dr. King. In St. Joe, there is a path leading up to the sculptures with milestones of history laid into the concrete. Each time we visit the statue, we talk about a different milestone. In Benton Harbor, my sons like to sit on the seats that are part of the design, and they especially like the boy that is part of the work. He looks like he is about the same age as my oldest, and that is very special. I know that we will enjoy the monuments for years to come.”

– Ashely S.

[Learn More](#)





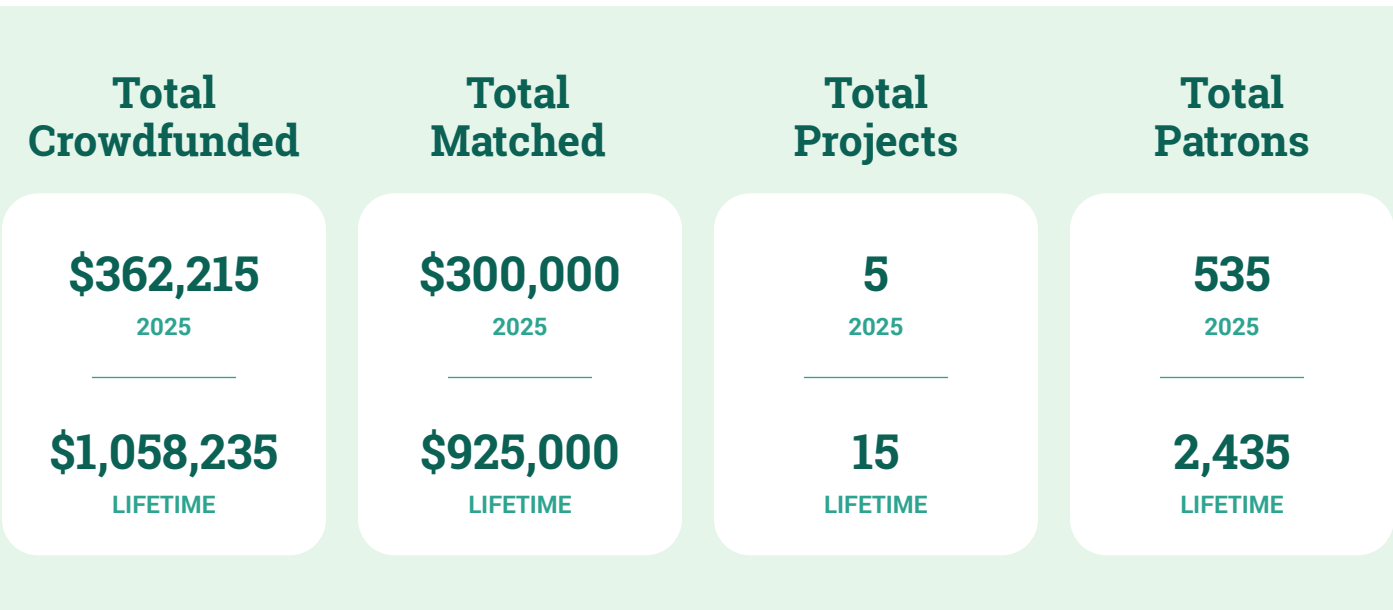
# Universal Design and Accessibility Funding Extension

## Universally Designed Public Spaces for All

Public Spaces Community Places aims to create welcoming community spaces for people of all ages and abilities. In 2023, the program released new guidelines and announced additional funding for projects that incorporate universal design into their site plans to encourage the development of truly inclusive public spaces.

- **All projects** must meet ADA requirements to be eligible for funding.
- **New public spaces** that incorporate universal design in the development are eligible for a match of up to \$75,000 to create highly accessible public spaces across Michigan.
- **Existing public spaces** that implement universal design to improve accessibility are eligible for a match of up to \$50,000.

We are proud to partner with [Disability Network Michigan](#) to support Project Creators as they navigate universal design, offering information, education, support, advocacy, and design guidance.





# Fantasy Forest

## Universal Design and Accessibility Funding Extension

ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN

CROWDFUNDED: \$79,405

CROWDGRANTING MATCH: \$75,000

POPULATION: 7,698

PATRONS: 186

The St. Johns Area Community Fund spearheaded a collaborative effort of the City of St. Johns, St. Johns Rotary, and the Kiwanis 707 Club to replace Fantasy Forest, a beloved but aging playground. The playground, crafted by community volunteers, had fallen into disrepair. The community had a vision to transform the wooden Fantasy Forest playground to be universally accessible, providing the freedom of play to all children and their families.

The result is an incredibly imaginative and accessible playspace that welcomes people of all abilities to join in and play. The new playground, which opened in 2025, ensures every child, regardless of ability, can experience the physical, mental, social, and emotional benefits of play. The crowdfunding campaign launched in 2024 secured the final funding for the \$2.4 million project. The group was intimidated by the \$75,000 needed to secure the matching grant from the MEDC, but in the end, secured donations from many small businesses, local philanthropic groups, and everyday citizens, raising more than \$4,000 over their goal!

“For us, an accessible playground isn't just nice-to-have, it's where barriers fall away, and we can simply be together. Fantasy Forest 2.0 isn't just a playground, it's a place where families like ours feel seen, included, and part of something bigger. It's how a community stops from being just where we live and becomes where we belong.”

– David W.

[Learn More](#)



Visit [patronicity.com/puremichigan](https://patronicity.com/puremichigan) to explore more projects supported by Public Spaces Community Places.





# Public Spaces Community Places

[patronicity.com/puremichigan](http://patronicity.com/puremichigan)

---



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

## Paula Holtz, EDFP

Managing Director, Regional Development

Michigan Economic Development Corporation

[holtzp@michigan.org](mailto:holtzp@michigan.org)



## Mahala Clayton

Michigan Director

Patronicity

[mahala@patronicity.com](mailto:mahala@patronicity.com)