



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 – 5:00 PM
CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

AGENDA

THE Downtown Development Authority OF THE CITY OF BUCHANAN, in compliance with Michigan's Open Meetings Act, hereby gives notice of a regular meeting to be held in the Chamber of City Hall.

** Comments may be submitted in writing at least 4 hours in advance to the City Clerk at Clerk@cityofbuchanan.com*

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Roll Call**
- IV. Approve Agenda**
- V. Public Comments - Agenda Items Only (3-minute limit)**
- VI. Approve Minutes**
 - A. Minutes**
 - 1) Consider approving the Regular Meeting Minutes from November 12th, 2025.
 - 2) Consider approving the Special Meeting Minutes from December 3rd, 2025.
 - 3) Consider approving the Regular Meeting Minutes from December 10th, 2025.
- VII. Unfinished Business**
 - A. TIF & Development Plan:** Consider approving the draft TIF & Development Plan.
- VIII. New Business**
 - A. Common Concert Series:** Michael Rowland & Randy Hendrixson.
 - B. Marketing RFP:** Discussion and Consideration of Draft Marketing RFP.
 - C. Michigan Downtown Association Membership:** Consider joining the Michigan Downtown Association Membership.
 - D. Finance Reports:** Monthly Reports.
- IX. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only (3-minute limit)**
- X. Staff/Committee Comments**
- XI. Adjournment**



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA) WORK SESSION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025 – 3:00 PM

CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 PM by Vice-Chair Joseph Williams.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. Roll Call

PRESENT: Vice Chair Joseph Williams, Treasurer Fran Terry (3:53 PM), Julie Capron, Sidney Finan, Mayor Mark Weedon, Michael Reed

CITY STAFF: City Manager, Tony McGhee; City Clerk, Kalla Langston; City Bookkeeper, Courtney Baham

GUEST: Dan Fette, Berrien County Community Development Director

IV. Public Comments- Agenda items

None.

V. New Business

A. DDA Work Session Items

1) Review the purpose of the DDA

Fetter reaffirmed that the DDA is intended to halt and prevent deterioration of property values within the downtown district by promoting increased activity and economic vitality. This may include physical improvements, marketing, event programming, and other initiatives that support downtown businesses and strengthen overall property values. Also reviewed statutory powers available to the DDA, including authority related to planning and development; real property acquisition, ownership, leasing, and disposition; public facility construction, rehabilitation, maintenance, and operation; establishment of rents and fees; contracting and grant acceptance; downtown marketing initiatives; broadband and wireless service contracting; and tools such as loan programs and business incubators.

2) Discuss DDA priorities

Because Buchanan's major streetscape work is largely complete (and the city took on borrowing for that), he recommended shifting DDA's focus toward:

- Marketing + programming (regional outreach, digital presence)
- Wayfinding/signage
- Ongoing maintenance/operations support for key downtown draw assets (Commons, Farmers Market, etc.)
- Potentially using DDA to absorb costs the City has been covering since the DDA went inactive—so City general fund pressure eases.

Fette also emphasized that the plan will be flexible and likely revised in 5–10 years.

3) Discuss the development of a budget to align with priorities

Fette discussed a draft “core annual budget” concept based solely on anticipated annual tax increment financing (TIF) revenue, estimated at approximately \$115,000–\$120,000 per year. The draft concept assumed that most of this annual revenue would be allocated to existing and ongoing downtown-related activities, including:

- Farmers Market operations, noted at approximately \$10,000 annually, with acknowledgment that the Farmers Market also generates revenue that was not included in the draft budget figures.
- Commons operations and maintenance, estimated at approximately \$15,000 annually.
- Commons concert series programming, estimated at approximately \$10,000 annually.
- Tin Shop Theatre programming, estimated at approximately \$10,000 annually. It was noted that the Tin Shop Theatre lies outside the DDA boundary; however, discussion included the potential use of the statutory “adjacent benefit” allowance rather than pursuing a boundary amendment.
- Pears Mill support, with general costs discussed and details to be refined.
- Downtown marketing and signage, estimated at approximately \$35,000 annually as a placeholder amount. It was noted that projected increases in signage costs reflected inflation modeling only and did not assume annual full replacement.

It was noted that, under this draft approach, most annual TIF revenue would be committed to ongoing obligations, limiting flexibility for new initiatives unless additional strategies were pursued.

Baham provided an update indicating that available reserve funds are substantially larger than initially assumed. While the Fette originally estimated an available balance of approximately \$116,000, subsequent review identified a one-time pool of approximately \$400,000 potentially available to the DDA. This amount includes cash held in DDA accounts, funds previously held in City capital accounts, and the anticipated reversal of a liability recorded during the period when the DDA was considered inoperable. Baham explained that auditors had previously recorded three journal entries to reflect the DDA fund as closed for audit purposes. Because the DDA is not being terminated, these entries are expected to be reversed in the FY 2024–2025 audit once financial statements are finalized. Baham indicated the reversal is anticipated to be bookable by December 31, subject to audit completion, and clarified that responsibility for updating the accounting records rests with staff rather than the auditors.

Façade Grants

Fette explained that façade grant and loan programs were temporarily removed from the draft annual budget to avoid overcommitting annual TIF revenue. Board members emphasized interest in retaining these tools as part of the DDA’s overall strategy. Discussion included potential approaches such as funding large one-time capital projects from reserves to free annual revenue for ongoing programs, structuring assistance as forgivable loans, and pursuing external matching programs, including examples used in other communities.

Business Incubator Discussion

The Board discussed the possibility of revisiting a business incubator concept. The Fette cautioned that incubators structured solely as shared office space often have limited success and noted that effective models typically include a defined industry focus, professional staffing, and partnerships. Local experience was discussed, including that Buchanan’s prior incubator lost momentum when staffing capacity was no longer available.

Events and Programming as Economic Drivers

Discussion included the potential role of special events as both economic drivers and revenue generators. Examples cited included winter events such as ice festivals and seasonal programming such as “Thrill on the Hill,” as well as consideration of family-oriented amenities and infrastructure that could provide year-round downtown activity.

4) Discuss financial overview

Baham discussed DDA banking and payment logistics, noting that funds could be transferred from other DDA accounts into the DDA checking account as needed to pay bills, at the Board's direction. Staff discussed ordering checks, including that starter checks may not work with the City's accounting system due to check numbering requirements and the need for sequential numbering. Staff clarified that the anticipated liability reversal relates to approximately \$200,000, with additional funds previously held in other accounts having been moved in order to remove prior restrictions and allow the DDA to allocate those funds as determined. Staff stated the audit is due to the State by December 31, and indicated the liability reversal would likely be reflected after the auditors provide finalized materials in January, with an estimated target of February for the liability to be shown as reversed in the City's records.

Staff also explained that the prior period, with no reporting to the State, corresponded to a period in which no tax capture occurred for the DDA.

5) Discussion of the process of appointing new members

Staff discussed vacancies and proposed a process in which DDA members would conduct interviews and provide a recommendation to the Mayor, who would then make appointments to be brought before the City Commission. Staff noted that applications would be publicized and that prior applicants could be contacted to confirm interest in reapplying. Discussion included eligibility considerations for membership (including residency/work/district-related criteria), with staff indicating they would verify requirements in the applicable statute/bylaws and provide clarification. Staff also discussed meeting alignment with the City Commission schedule and noted that City Commission meeting timing in December could affect when appointments could be formally considered.

VI. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only (3-minute limit)

William Bielby- introduced their planned relocation/expansion and expressed interest in supporting downtown vitality and DDA efforts through arts/business engagement and communication/research support.

Randy Hendrixson- encouraged establishing a community events calendar before pursuing a marketing RFP, noting the importance of coordinating with local event organizers and leveraging free regional calendars. Also advised caution regarding façade program scale and referenced prior conceptual plans and accessibility/connection improvements (including a prior effort related to Mill Alley accessibility).

Kate Glassman suggested potential downtown park improvements (e.g., splash pad and/or public restrooms), clarified that City funds were advanced for an event and later reimbursed through donations, noted the availability of a volunteer group, encouraged sharing recruitment information with local media, and clarified the current number of seated DDA members.

VII. Staff/Committee Comments

Board members shared initial reactions to Fette's draft framework, including general support for the approach and interest in developing a clear set of priorities to guide future work. A board member noted prior experience suggesting wayfinding/signage costs may be lower than the draft placeholder amount and recommended prioritization to support focus and productivity.

Discussion continued regarding event planning considerations, including staffing requirements and sustainability for major events (e.g., "Thrill on the Hill"), and the importance of volunteer capacity. A prior concept for a reusable slide and associated upfront investment was referenced.

VIII. Adjournment

Williams adjourned the meeting at 4:51 PM.



SPECIAL MEETING: DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 03, 2025 – 5:00 PM

CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Joseph Williams at 5:00 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. Roll Call

PRESENT: Vice-Chair Joseph Williams, Treasurer Fran Terry, Sidney Finan (5:06 PM), Michael Reed, Julie Capron

ABSENT: Mayor Mark Weedon

CITY STAFF: City Manager, Tony McGhee & City Clerk, Kalla Langston-Weiss

IV. Public Comments - Agenda Items Only *(3-minute limit)*

None.

V. New Business

A. Interviews

- 1) Haley Jones (5:00 pm)
- 2) Michelle Fletcher (5:15 pm)
- 3) Dion Bouzas (5:30 pm)
- 4) Libby Hein (5:45 pm)
- 5) Tracy Mast (6:00 pm)
- 6) John Wregglesworth (6:15 pm)
- 7) Caren Furdeck (6:30 pm)

The members of the DDA engaged in thoughtful discussions with each interviewee, posing a variety of questions to gather insights. Upon concluding the interviews, the DDA carefully considered the candidates and recommended four individuals to the Mayor for consideration for the City Commission: Haley Jones, Libby Hein, Michelle Fletcher, and Tracy Mast.

VI. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only *(3-minute limit)*

None.

VII. Staff/Committee Comments

VIII. Adjournment

Williams adjourned the meeting at 6:58 PM.



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2025 – 5:00 PM
CHAMBER OF BUCHANAN CITY HALL - 302 N REDBUD TRAIL, BUCHANAN MI

MINUTES

THE Downtown Development Authority OF THE CITY OF BUCHANAN, in compliance with Michigan's Open Meetings Act, hereby gives notice of a regular meeting to be held in the Chamber of City Hall.

** Comments may be submitted in writing at least 4 hours in advance to the City Clerk at Clerk@cityofbuchanan.com*

I. Call to Order

Terry called to order at 5:00 pm.

II. Swearing in of new board members

Administrative Assistant Lysy swore Haley Jones, Tracy Mast, Libby Hein, and Michelle Fletcher in as new DDA Board Members.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Terry led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Roll Call

Present: Capron, Terry, Weedon, Reed, Finan, Jones, Mast, Hein, Fletcher, Williams (arrived at 5:08pm)

Absent: None.

City Staff Present: City Manager Tony McGhee, Administrative Assistant Emma Lysy

V. Appoint Officers: Chair and Secretary

Motion made by Capron, seconded by Weedon, to nominate Mast as DDA Chair. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Motion made by Terry, seconded by Weedon, to nominate Reed as DDA Secretary. Roll call vote carried unanimously.

VI. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Capron, seconded by Weedon, to nominate Mast as DDA Chair. Voice vote carried unanimously.

VII. Public Comments - Agenda Items Only (3-minute limit)

None.

VIII. Approve Minutes

- A. 1) September 10, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
- 2) October 8th, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
- 3) October 24th, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
- 4) November 12, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Reed, seconded by Terry, to approve minutes from the September 10, October 8, October 24, and November 12 meetings. Voice vote carried unanimously.

IX. Unfinished Business

A. TIF Plan- Dan Fette

Fette introduced himself to the new members of the DDA, including his background with DDAs and TIFs. Now that the DDA knows what its revenue will look like, it can begin to plan based on its shortlist of priorities. It will include less infrastructure and physical development than the 2008 plan and will look at transitioning previous DDA entities like the Tin Shop and Farmer's Market back under the DDA. From the survey of the DDA, it will include downtown marketing, events, signage/wayfinding, the Tin Shop/Farmer's Market/Pears Mill, Façade programs, and the Concert Series.

Fette presented a 15 year cash flow analysis, explained the potential numbers and what comparable communities do. Signage is expensive but there's a wide range of possible spending to consider. The Mill, Farmer's Market, and Tin Shop numbers are based on current City expenses. Most façade granting programs are for \$10-20k. City auditors confirmed they could remove the liabilities in place, meaning the DDA has the \$500k the City had maintained from the previous DDA as part of their funds.

There was discussion about what to prioritize. Terry and Capron agree that marketing is important for driving people downtown. Finan spoke to people desiring more special events, which Mast agrees will give people a reason to come to town. Williams feels wayfinding is not a top priority and could be postponed, with events being higher.

McGhee asked if marketing and events could be one category for maximum flexibility for planning, and suggested getting quotes from a marketing firm to get a better idea of the costs. Budget amendments can also be made if priorities change. Fette clarified that the categories important to the DDA are what he needs to create a draft TIF plan, since budgets can be changed. Buchanan will be the best funded DDA in the county.

Fette can have a draft TIF plan ready by the January meeting.

X. New Business

None.

XI. Public Comment - Non-Agenda Items Only (3-minute limit)

Randy Hendrixson – Thanked new members and reiterated what he had commented at previous meetings: he advises the DDA be careful about putting a lot of money into marketing without having anything to market. He recommends putting together a comprehensive event calendar for the City. He also emphasized the importance of a full-time, paid director. If the DDA doesn't take on Thrill on the Hill, it won't happen. Hendrixson would take part in a Thrill or Event subcommittee.

XII. Staff/Committee Comments

McGhee spoke about the downtown fire pits. The total cost is \$450, and the City will supply wood.

Motion made by Capron, seconded by Reed to rent fire pits from the City for the Holiday parade, not to exceed \$450.

Aye: Capron, Fletcher, Hein, Jones, Mast, Reed, Terry, Weedon, Williams

Nay: Finan

Motion carried.

There was discussion on holding a special meeting to discuss priorities for the draft TIF plan. It was decided to hold a special meeting Thursday, December 18th at 2pm.

Capron: None.

Terry: Thanked new members of the DDA.

Williams: None.

Weedon: Thanked new members and welcomed them to the DDA.

Reed: The marketing RFP should go out sooner rather than later and believes too much money is currently allocated to wayfinding. He agreed an event subcommittee is important. He is also a member of the Niles DDA and could act as a liaison.

Finan: Thanked new members of the DDA.

Jones: Thanked the Board for letting her be a part of it.

Mast: Thanked the Board, agreed that less should be allocated to wayfinding and events should be a priority. she would like to stay united as a board and work with other entities like the Chamber of Commerce.

Hein: Thanked the Board, and is excited for events, agreeing they should be a priority. The Common Concert Series would benefit from broadening the ages they're targeting.

Fletcher: Wanted to echo Hein's comments. She is happy to be here.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:09pm.

Memorandum



Date: January 8, 2026

To: Buchanan Downtown Development Authority

From: Tony McGhee

Subject: Draft Marketing Services Request for Proposal

Attached for your review is a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for market analysis, marketing strategy, and media services focused on increasing targeted foot traffic to Buchanan's Central Business District.

This draft is intended as a starting point for discussion and refinement by the DDA, rather than a final document. The goal is to provide a framework that the Board can react to, adjust, and ultimately tailor to best meet the DDA's objectives and available resources.

The intent of this proposed approach is two-fold. First, the tiered budget structure is designed to allow the DDA to compare costs, deliverables, and levels of service at different investment levels. By seeing what is achievable at multiple price points, the Board can make a more informed decision about scope, priorities, and value. Second, by asking respondents to describe their approach and methodologies, the RFP is structured to encourage creative and strategic thinking from proposers. This may result in ideas, tools, or approaches not previously considered by the DDA, and provide insight into how different firms would address Buchanan's market, attraction potential, and downtown character.

The draft also reflects several best practices commonly used by downtown development organizations, including:

- Emphasis on data-driven market analysis to inform marketing decisions;
- Integration of branding, digital presence, media placement, and performance tracking;
- Flexibility to adapt strategies based on measurable outcomes; and
- A clear evaluation framework to support transparent selection.

Memorandum

Staff believes this approach balances structure with flexibility and positions the DDA to receive meaningful, comparable proposals while still leaving room for innovation and refinement.

We look forward to the Board's feedback on the draft, including scope, budget tiers, evaluation criteria, and any additional priorities the DDA would like to see reflected before the RFP is finalized and released.

Please feel free to share comments or questions during the meeting or in advance, as appropriate.

Request for Bids



Project Name: Discover Buchanan

Project Location: City of Buchanan – Central Business District

Issue Date: TBD

Bid Due Date: TBD

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Buchanan Downtown Development Authority (“DDA”) is seeking proposals from qualified firms or consultants to provide market analysis, marketing strategy and media services that will include, but not be limited to, driving targeted foot traffic to Buchanan’s Central Business District (“CBD”). This initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance the visibility, vibrancy, and economic vitality of downtown Buchanan.

Buchanan is located in a region that sees substantial tourism, particularly during the spring, summer, and fall months. Despite being within close proximity to popular destinations in the area, the community is not currently capturing a proportionate share of visitor spending. The DDA’s goal is to close this gap by leveraging targeted marketing and strategic forms of engagement to draw highly targeted visitors to the CBD.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected firm or consultant will work collaboratively with the DDA to:

- Conduct a Market Analysis to understand regional tourism patterns, consumer behavior, and business mix opportunities in the CBD.
- Develop a Comprehensive Marketing Strategy designed to:
 - Promote Buchanan’s downtown businesses and events;
 - Target both local residents and regional visitors;
 - Identify and build a differentiated brand identity.
- Execute a Marketing and Promotional Campaign, which
 - Engages potential visitors designing, developing, constructing, and operating a dedicated promotional website: “DiscoverBuchanan.com” including content developed specific to businesses located within the CBD;
 - Identify and negotiate internet, print, radio, television and outdoor media campaign opportunities that vector targeted visitors to information available at Discover Buchanan website;
 - Utilize social media platforms as appropriate, including posting, monitoring, and responding to interactions; in connection with messaging

Request for Proposals

- available on the Discover Buchanan website, as well as ongoing media promotions;
- o Develop and deploy brand messaging,
- Track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as reach, engagement, website clicks, and actual business impact feedback to evaluate success and adapt strategies accordingly utilizing available analytical tools

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include:

1. Firm Background & Qualifications

- Overview of the firm or consultant, including history, team, and core competencies.
- Experience with marketing, media purchases, promotions, website development and general business experience;;
- Relevant examples of similar work.

2. Approach & Methodology

- Description of your approach to market analysis, content strategy, platform use, and advertising.
- How your strategy will capture and convert regional tourism into local visits and spending.
- Tools and metrics you'll use to evaluate effectiveness.

3. Tiered Budget Options

Proposals may outline deliverables and level of service provided at any of the following tiers:

- Tier 1: \$1,500 per month
- Tier 2: \$3,000 per month
- Tier 3: \$5,000 per month

Each budget tier should specify:

- Scope of work
- Frequency of social media content and engagement
- Extent of advertising or boosted content
- Reporting expectations
- Additional services included

REFERENCES

At least two references from previous clients for whom similar work has been completed.

Request for Proposals

TERM OF CONTRACT

The initial contract term is one (1) year, with the option to renew for up to two (2) additional one-year terms based on performance and mutual agreement.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Demonstrated experience and qualifications
- Creativity and effectiveness of proposed strategies
- Understanding of Buchanan's market and tourism potential
- Scope and value at each price tier
- Clarity and completeness of proposal
- References and past performance

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- **Deadline for submission:** [Insert Date]
- **Submit via email to:** [Insert Contact Email]
- **Subject line:** "DDA Discover Buchanan Proposal – [Firm Name]"

Please submit your sealed bid by to:

Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk
302 North Red Bud Trail
Buchanan, MI 49107

For any questions regarding the project, please contact:

Tony McGhee, City Manager
tmcghee@cityofbuchanan

PLEASE INCLUDE AS THE LAST PAGE OF PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY: (PLEASE PRINT)

Request for Proposals

Company Name

Phone Number

Address

City, State Zip code

Contact Person/Person Submitting Proposal

Email

Signature of Person Submitting Proposal

Date

M E M B E R S H I P O P T I O N S

JOIN THE MICHIGAN DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership Category & Rate enclosed: _____

Michigan Downtown Association
P.O. Box 3591 North Branch, MI 48461 | ph 248.838.9711 | director@michigandowntowns.com | www.michigandowntowns.com

Please return this form with payment to MDA. Make checks payable to Michigan Downtown Association. You may join and pay online via PayPal. Visit michigandowntowns.com

Visa MC Dis Amex Card No.: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Sec. Code: _____ Zip Code: _____ Signature: _____

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Municipal or Public Agency

This category includes any downtown agency such as DDA, TIF, PSD, etc., along with cities, villages, and townships. The dues amount is based only on the overall DDA or downtown budget.

\$249,999 and under: \$250
\$250,000-\$499,999: \$400
\$500,000+: \$650

**Business**

Dues: \$400

**Business Associate Member:** \$1,600

Includes one-year membership and sponsorship of 2 Workshops and Annual Conference.

**Non-Profit:** \$200

This category includes any non-profit that is not associated with a public agency or municipality.

**Individual (Non-Business):** \$150**Student:** \$100

This category is valid only for students currently enrolled in college or high school.

**MICHIGAN
DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION**



About MDA

Founded in 1980, the Michigan Downtown Association (MDA) is a state-wide, non-profit organization and a driving force in the interest and growth of downtowns and communities throughout Michigan. The MDA encourages the development, redevelopment, and continuing improvement of Michigan communities and downtowns. Our members support economic development throughout the State of Michigan.

Who Are Members?

Downtown management has never been more essential to the economic stability of a community and region.

MDA members are

- Downtown Agencies
- Cities
- Townships
- Economic Development Organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Businesses
- Individuals

Joining the MDA

The MDA offers affordable membership categories. Membership may be paid online via PayPal on the MDA website, www.michigandowntowns.com, with a credit card over the phone, 248-838-9711, or by filling out the attached application and submitting it with a check for the appropriate amount of dues to:

MICHIGAN DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
DANA WALKER, DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 3591
NORTH BRANCH, MI 48461



michigandowntowns.com

248.838.9711

director@michigandowntowns.com



Why Join the MDA?

Advocacy

- Receive critical legislative support, advocacy assistance, and downtown policy resources
- Attend MDA's Annual Advocacy Day in Lansing
- Receive resources and shareable documents to help with reporting requirements and communications to elected officials

Education

- Annual 2-Day Conference
- Workshops
- Webinars
- Trainings
- MDA's Michigan Professional Development and Management Certificate Program

Networking

- Connection with peers
- Online membership directory
- Private Facebook page
- After-hours social gatherings
- MDA events

Visibility

- Partnership opportunities
- Exclusive MDA co-op advertising initiatives
- Annual Downtown Day
- MDA promotions and social media platforms

Resources

- Regular email communications with MDA
- Message/discussion boards
- Access to state lawmakers and downtown management experts, important documents, event presentations, and more

"The first thing I always recommend to anyone who is interested in a career in downtown development is to join the MDA for the resources and the wealth of knowledge that the organization provides."

Elizabeth Morse, Sparta DDA

"The connections, knowledge, and resources are indispensable in making my job as a DDA Director/Economic Development Manager a little easier."

Ian McCain, Eastpointe DDA

"The MDA provides resources and advocacy to downtowns no matter the size. If I have a question regarding DDA law or downtown policy, I turn to the MDA for answers and support."

James Alt, Lapeer DDA

Memorandum



Date: January 6, 2026
 To: Downtown Development Authority Board Members
 From: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director
 Subject: **Michigan Downtown Association Membership**

Background.

The Michigan Downtown Association (MDA) is a membership organization founded toward enabling and helping to promote downtown commercial districts. Members include downtown development agencies, economic development organizations and chamber of commerce's to name a few.

I have worked in a community that was a member of the organization and attended several workshops and conferences and found them very informative, especially at the time there were new rules associated with TIFF's and providing information on the city website. The events are well attended with excellent speakers.

Attached is the membership flyer.

The organization hosts several events throughout the calendar year in different parts of the state. Following are events scheduled for 2026:

March 3, 2026	MDA Advocacy Day – Lansing (10 AM to 3 PM)
March 4, 2026	MDA Spring Workshop – East Lansing (8 AM to 4 PM)
Late Spring (May)	MDA Workshop
Fall (October/November)	MDA Conference

In addition, there is on-line training and support for organizations and members.

The annual membership fee is \$250 with city staff being the primary contact and forwarding information regarding training to the DDA Board.

Recommendation.

If the Board is interested in being a member they should make a motion directing staff to complete the necessary paperwork and submit the annual membership fee. The preliminary budget included money for training.