

# ACTIVE COMMUNITY CAPITAL

## REVITALIZING A DOWNTOWN... DEMONSTRATING PHILANTHROPY

Endowed community capital never stops giving back. Foundations have, through 25 years of public-private partnerships, helped transform Grand Rapids, Michigan, into a growing vibrant city.

### ENRICHING QUALITY OF LIFE

#### EDUCATION

By offering critical support from the 6th grade and the promise of a free college education, Challenge Scholars is brightening the future for hundreds of at-risk students.



#### ARTS

Transforming the way a community thinks about art, the annual ArtPrize competition attracts the best and brightest while making Grand Rapids an international destination.



#### ENVIRONMENT

Restoring the Grand River to its natural state, Grand Rapids Whitewater is re-envisioning how a city interacts with nature.



#### HEALTHCARE

A model of public and private collaboration, Heart of the City Health Center is delivering integrated healthcare to low-income families regardless of their ability to pay.



#### NEIGHBORHOODS

Changing minds about what urban living can be, Dwelling Place has turned a once-blighted neighborhood into a stable community for low-income families.



### GROWING ECONOMIC IMPACT

**1996**

#### Van Andel Arena

A must-play, high-grossing venue. Mayor George Heartwell says, "The Arena spurred the vitality we see today, a remarkable story of an urban center that has reinvented itself."

Private funds: **\$21M**  
Public funds: **\$56M**

ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$22.6M (2011)



**2013**

#### Downtown Market

Features indoor and outdoor spaces and houses dozens of vendors, rental incubator kitchens and classrooms.

Private funds: **\$12.5M**  
Public funds: **\$15M**

ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$56M (10 year)



ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$1.57B (10 year)

**2010**

#### Michigan State University Secchia Center

The new headquarters for MSU's College of Human Medicine. This LEED® Gold certified building houses centers for excellence in both women's health and Parkinson's research.

Private funds: **\$40M**  
Public funds: **\$50M**



ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$26.6M (2011)

**2003**

#### DeVos Place

A premier convention center with a picturesque riverfront setting hosting large events and tradeshows.

Private funds: **\$33M**  
Public funds: **\$182M**



HOUSING UNITS: 687% (25 years)

**2014**

#### Downtown Housing

Reaches a point of critical mass that will continue to attract new development.



**1 in 3**

employees of DeVos Place and Van Andel Arena live in surrounding neighborhoods.

**\$420M**

**\$125M**  
PHILANTHROPY

PRIVATE

PARTNERSHIP

PUBLIC

**\$295M**  
GOVERNMENT

GRAND RAPIDS, MI

ENDOWED PHILANTHROPY FUELS REINVENTION AND GROWTH.

Highlights – From Grand Vision to Grand Action – Revitalizing a Downtown and Demonstrating Philanthropy can be downloaded at: [philanthropycollaborative.org](http://philanthropycollaborative.org) and [michiganfoundations.org](http://michiganfoundations.org).

1990

1991

Grand Vision coalesces – diverse group of community leaders address the city’s critical development needs and with philanthropic funds do \$120,000 economic impact study

1993

Group renamed Grand Action and adopts motto: Think Boldly. Plan Collegially. Act Urgently.

1996

Van Andel Arena opens – \$21 million in private support leverages \$56 million in public support

2003

Dwelling Place secures funding – \$1 million in private support to purchase and repurpose three dilapidated buildings leading to more than 1,300 affordable housing units today created with public and private support

2003

DeVos Place Convention Center opens – \$33 million in private support leverages \$182 million in public support

2008

Heart of the City Health Center created – \$2 million in private support leveraged by more than \$25 million in public support to serve more than 8,000 low-income patients annually

2009

ArtPrize launched – private support seeded a public-private partnership that continues with diverse public support

*Time* Magazine in 2013 listed ArtPrize as one of five worldwide festivals you won’t want to miss

2010

Michigan State University College of Human Medicine opens – \$40 million in private support leverages \$50 million in public support; impetus came from Grand Action which contracted in 2004 with Deloitte for an economic impact analysis

2013

Downtown Market opens – \$12.5 million in private support leverages \$15 million in public support

2013

Challenge Scholars launched – commencing with two sixth grades, the program includes math and literacy coaching, a college pathway coordinator, food and housing assistance and other safety nets forming a web of public-private partnerships; \$32 million goal for private support exceeded in 2015

2014

Grand Rapids Whitewater Economic Impact Analysis completed – support from four foundations and in 2015 support from Grand Valley Metro Council representing 36 communities

2015

# ACTIVE COMMUNITY CAPITAL

## REVITALIZING A DOWNTOWN... DEMONSTRATING PHILANTHROPY

Endowed community capital never stops giving back. Foundations have, through 25 years of public-private partnerships, helped transform Grand Rapids, Michigan into a growing vibrant city.

THIS STORY IS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE REPORT **FROM GRAND VISION TO GRAND ACTION – REVITALIZING A DOWNTOWN AND DEMONSTRATING PHILANTHROPY** THAT CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT:

[philanthropycollaborative.org](http://philanthropycollaborative.org)  
[michiganfoundations.org](http://michiganfoundations.org)



In 1991, at a cross-roads faced by many mid-sized industrial cities, community leaders in Grand Rapids, Michigan lit a spark by convening a coalition – later dubbed Grand Action – to address the city’s critical development needs. Seeded with investments from private foundations, it initially focused on the potential economic impact of an arena and expanded convention facilities. Between 1996 and 2003, Grand Action completed these two anchor projects resulting in a continuing transformation of a downtown fueled by public-private partnerships.

Downtown Grand Rapids today is home to a thriving arena, convention center, medical corridor, university campus, entertainment district, urban market, hundreds of new residents and refreshed neighborhoods – impacting the quality of life for all greater Grand Rapids residents.

**Bruce Katz, Vice President & Co-Director  
Metropolitan Policy Program  
Brookings**

“Cities need to innovate and collaborate at the local level and depend on their networks, something Grand Rapids does quite well.”

### PHILANTHROPY IS MORE THAN MONEY

### THE GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROCESS DEMONSTRATES THAT FOUNDATIONS CONTRIBUTE MORE THAN FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

Foundations provide valuable gifts of time, expertise, leadership, access to influencers, indispensable innovation, patient yet urgent passion for their communities, willingness to take risks and neutral spaces for convenings.

**Eric DeLong  
Deputy City Manager  
Grand Rapids**

“The learnings from 25 years of collaboration have given the City both the confidence and capacity to take the lead with our partners on bold initiatives.”

### ENDOWED COMMUNITY CAPITAL IS...

Donors can achieve goals well beyond the lifetime of any individual or family. Thousands of caring people in communities across America have made philanthropic gifts invested to create charitable foundations or donor advised funds at community foundations. These endowed gifts provide a stable source of funding to tackle both immediate pressing needs and big issues with solutions requiring a long-term horizon.

Grand Rapids is fortunate to have residents who have created charitable endowments with a goal to give back to a place they call home and provide active community capital that benefit generations to come.

### PROVEN IMPACT

The private (including philanthropic) investment of \$125 million has triggered more than \$420 million in downtown capital investments. Incredible outcomes are possible when philanthropists who think BIG have the ability to collaborate on time horizons of 10, 20, even 30 years.

“Today, the talent pool we are interested in wants to know what a vibrant Grand Rapids has to offer. Thanks to Grand Action and forward-looking donors, the answer to their question is yes, we have much to offer.”

**Birgit Klohs, President & CEO  
The Right Place Inc.**

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The report *From Grand Vision to Grand Action, Revitalizing a Downtown and Demonstrating Philanthropy* has been produced by The Philanthropic Collaborative (TPC), a non-partisan organization in Washington, D.C. providing information to policymakers about the economic and social impacts of foundation grantmaking, and the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), a nonprofit membership association of 350 foundations with a mission to grow the impact of Michigan philanthropy.

