

Place-Based Economic Development

Placemaking

COVID-19 Programming Shifts: Our placemaking work (and placemaking broadly), which primarily serves to activate our campus and build connections with our neighbors, looks very different during the COVID-19 pandemic. A primary way we are staying connected to our placemaking community is through our PlaceMakers email listserv and Instagram page. Additionally, given the current demand for public space, we are exploring ways to safely invite people to use Woodward | Warren Park.

2020 Student Design Summit: The 2020 Student Design Summit invited students to explore the future of libraries and public universities and prepare specific ideas and design solutions for Cass Avenue, building connections between the main branch of the Detroit Public Library (DPL) and WSU. Submissions responded not only to the Summit prompt but the constantly changing dynamic of urban living during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting the need to move beyond a library or civic institutions physical setting and showcasing social media strategies and interactive outdoor programming. A group of nine (9) WSU students won the competition and received a \$2,500 cash prize in May. A 3rd Student Design Summit focused on digital inclusion is being planned for fall 2020.

Transportation & Mobility

Dart Partnership: WSU began offering enrolled students free 31-Day Dart Passes in 2019. The passes are activated upon 1st use and good for unlimited rides on DDOT and SMART fixed-route buses, as well as the QLINE streetcar for 31 days and available via The W Food Pantry. Between November 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, we distributed nearly 1,200 passes. Based on the success of this pilot program, OED is proposing an expanded partnership with Dart providers and MoGo. The proposed \$800,000 program would give all students and employees free access to DDOT, SMART, the QLINE and MoGo. Funding would come from reductions in our existing campus shuttle service and an increased Student Services Fee. WSU Parking and Transportation and the Student Senate are supportive.

TechTown Area Buildings & Facilities

Industry Innovation Center (I2C): TechTown and OED are working to transform the now Industry Innovation Center (I2C) building and site into a place where university, industry and our community come together and collaborate. In 2019, we hired the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) to facilitate a participatory design process and, together, we engaged more than 300 people including representatives from WSU, TechTown, NextEnergy, industry partners and neighborhood stakeholders. The resulting conceptual design seeks to better serve university and industry needs by upgrading existing amenities and adding much-needed meeting and kitchen space. Exterior improvements (including a large public plaza) will re-define the relationship between I2C and the surrounding neighborhood.

Our initial plans for 2020 included circulating our conceptual design and estimate among prospective funders and re-deploying the outdoor seating, shade umbrellas and signage we purchased and made available during our design process. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, we are instead exploring executing several small arts-based placemaking projects on the site—applying for an MCACA Project Support Grant from the MEDC and a Design and Access Fund grant from the CFSEM. These projects are all pulled directly from our conceptual design process and resulting design (attached), meaning each one meets a community-identified need. They're also all big visual cues of larger changes to come, will help maintain momentum created via our design process and inform final plans.

Nonprofit Capacity-Building & Innovation

Co.act Detroit

Background: In December of 2017, TechTown Detroit was awarded a three-year grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for \$4.75 million to launch the Center for Nonprofit Support at 6568 Woodward Avenue, just five blocks from the current TechTown building. Partners in the launch of the Center include the Michigan Nonprofit Association and Michigan Community Resources locally, as well as Community Wealth Partners nationally. Detroit's nonprofit community is both diverse and expansive, addressing the myriad needs and opportunities across southeast Michigan with relevant and impactful programming. However, many of these nonprofit organizations struggle to sustain themselves and fight a constant uphill battle to keep their doors open and invest in their staffs' long-term development. At the same time, countless opportunities for nonprofits in our region to collaborate, leverage efforts and deepen their impact go unrealized, either for lack of knowledge of one another's work or lack of capacity to solidify connections. Through the establishment of Co.act Detroit (formerly known as the Nonprofit Center for Support), the Foundation, TechTown and our community partners will meet these challenges of our nonprofit sector head-on.

Brand Identity Development: Co.act Detroit contracted with Earlyworks LLC, a Detroit based strategy and insights firm, to develop an integrated launch and rollout strategy, develop brand assets and a positioning approach to tell the organizational story and develop a comprehensive communications plan. Co.act Detroit is currently implementing the communications plan and continuing to increase awareness about Co.act Detroit programming through local and national media platforms.

Staffing: Prior to COVID-19, we were recruiting a Communications Manager to implement our comprehensive communication plan and continuing efforts to increase awareness of our services. We have paused our recruitment at this time due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Programming: Like many organizations, Co.act Detroit has pivoted our programming into the virtual space due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our work to connect nonprofits to information and resources transcends the physical space and we have seen an

increase in the request for our services. Co.act Detroit received a \$1,975,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to support the creation of a Technical Assistance Fund (The Activate Fund) for nonprofits receiving services through the Co.act Detroit. Co.act Detroit will provide \$1,000,000 in grants to support nonprofit capacity building. Applications for the fund closed on April 22nd with more than 275 applications received. This underscores the tremendous need of nonprofits in southeast Michigan at this time. We also hosted 7 information sessions and 200 office hour appointments to assist nonprofits with their grant applications. A jury composed of cross-sector leaders are currently reviewing the applications for final selection. Grantees will be announced in June 2020. An additional \$500,000 will support pilot projects focused on collaboration and developing earned revenue for nonprofits. On April 24, Co.act hosted our third corporate social responsibility conversation with a discussion centered on nonprofit resilience during the COVID-19 crisis. Co.act Detroit has also hosted workshops focused on nonprofit wellbeing, fundraising, data analysis, and goal setting. We have hosted more than 50 appointments through our Co.Lab Connect program, which connects nonprofits with subject matter experts for one-on-one coaching.

Talent-based Economic Development

Detroit Revitalization Fellows Program

Acknowledging the changes occurring across the city since 2011, in April 2019 the program embarked on a strategic assessment. DRF partnered with The Work Department and Public Sector Consultants to engage nearly 100 diverse stakeholders including current and alumni Fellows, funders, Advisory Council members, current and previous employers, coaches, other sector leaders, and residents via phone interviews, surveys, focus groups, and strategic planning sessions. The goal was to understand and develop a vision for how the fellowship could make a greater impact while continuing to nurture and promote the leaders Detroit needs now. The assessment is complete and the executive summary and five-year strategic plan will be publicly shared soon.

This year, the DRF staff will execute the strategic plan timeline, continue to pursue funding, implement alumni programming, and finalize the design for Cohort V. The aspirational launch timeframe is fall 2020.

Alumni Engagement:

DRF staff kicked off this year's alumni engagement with the 2020 Detroit Policy Conference, held at MotorCity Casino Hotel on January 29th. The fellowship sponsored 21 conference registrations leveraging the event for fellow and broader networking as well as learning about local and regional issues. The staff is developing a year-long engagement calendar.

Partnerships: In February and March, DRF convened five local talent/leadership development programs/organizations to explore possible connections across our work. This was the first time leadership from these programs/organizations were in the room for such a conversation.

Raising DRF's Profile: The Detroit Revitalization Fellows is now regarded as the longest-standing mid-career urban fellowship program in the country. The staff is regularly looked to for guidance from other organizations that are considering launching their own fellowship programs, and to share its expertise. Fellows are consistently being recognized for their contributions to the future of Detroit and the region, and being given increasingly influential professional opportunities. Recent examples include:

DRF joined the Youth in Community Development Consortium convened by Building the Engine of Community Development in Detroit (BECDD). Cohort III Fellow Shari Williams was promoted to Senior Program Manager at Detroit Future City. Cohort IV Fellow Lily Gonzalez was received the 2019 Outstanding Leadership in Sustainability Award presented by Detroit 2030 District and the USGBC Detroit Region. Cohort III Fellow Jeffrey Nolish appeared on WDET's Morning Edition and talked about the City Charter Commission focus group's efforts to create an Office of Disability Affairs. The Detroit News published Cohort IV Fellow Christine Sauvé's opinion article about supporting immigrant neighbors.

Business-based Economic Development

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program, a program of Wayne State University

During the month of April the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program transitioned to an "online" curriculum delivery method from an "on physical premise" delivery approach as a result of COVID-19. The first "virtual class" occurred on March 31st; we completed the cohort on May 8th. The transition was not without challenges and the initial change was dramatic for many scholars. We actively worked to keep scholars engaged and at times found ourselves vying for their concentrated efforts while a pandemic, and all of its consequences, played out in the background. The majority of our month was occupied by acclimating the internal team to the new delivery model and assisting scholars with the transition. Throughout the transition we diligently continued to move the scholars through the curriculum.

In May, we accomplished two goals, which were a culmination of the work that was carried out in April. Goal #1: we completed cohort #18 and graduated 32 (out of 37) scholars. Goal #2: we surpassed our recruiting the objective with over 175 companies completing the "part one" application surpassing the goal of 120 applicants. These goals were accomplished during a challenging time making our achievements particularly notable. The Goldman Sachs Foundation decided, at a national level, not to have a summer cohort and defer the "summer cohort" to September 2020. Over the summer months our team will focus on actively supporting our 545 alumni and further promoting the program in the local entrepreneurial eco-system. We view this as an optimal opportunity to further collaborate with TechTown in our outreach and support activities.

Wayne State University Innovation Studio

The WSU Innovation Studio, powered by TechTown, is a collaborative space that sparks a student's entrepreneurial journey through brainstorming, coaching, and training. We are focused on *closing the confidence gap* needed to launch a new business.

Key partnerships:

- Studio director serving on STEAM Challenge advisory committee and as instructor; teaching a Lunch & Learn on "Competitive Market Analysis"
- Studio director facilitated SW7095 & MGT7700 (EI7800/EI5900) resource workshop on market and research analysis and business planning for social entrepreneurship
- Co-facilitated CFPCA's Real Industry music/entertainment mentorship pilot execution Feb - March
- Participated as a coach for the Honors College HONS 4250 course "Technology Cultures". Throughout the course, we read scholarship in the fields of science and technology studies, the history of technology, the anthropology of infrastructure, mobility studies, critical data studies, media studies, etc.

Measurements:

- 13 coaching clients for Fall 2019 – Winter 2020 semesters (goal of 15-20 clients) [comparison: TechTown's SWOT City Portfolio managers 20 clients per year]
- Engagement with over 300 students entrepreneurs and innovators at STEAM, Optimize Wayne, in classrooms, and city/campus events
 - Surpasses year 2 goal of 175 students
 - [comparison: 166 enrollments in I&E spring/summer/fall/winter 2019-2020 coursework]

Industries represented include mobility/light manufacturing, fashion, marketing & advertising, data + analytics, AI + EdTech, mobile software, and professional services.

Success:

- Surpassed Year 1 goal of 3% of 3500 targeted population (105 students) engaging over 300 students
- Quarter page ad in the winter 2020 The South End – Wayne State's student newspaper
- Digital ads on thesouthend.wayne.edu from Feb – April 2020
- Information table at Student Center every Friday during January 2020; Tuesday during February 2020
- Director needs one additional class to complete Advanced Design Thinking certificate program with IDEO U

Detroit Small Business and TechTown Stabilization Funds

Submitted by: Ned Staebler, Vice President for Economic Development

The TechTown Programs team was instrumental in the development and execution of two emergency, back-to-back small business relief (grant) funds in response to the rapid onset of COVID-19 in Detroit in March.

TechTown's initial effort, the Detroit Small Business Stabilization Fund (DSBSF) launched April 8th. Critically, it was the first small business emergency relief fund in Detroit. The DSBSF was designed to support low-income, very small businesses (less than 10 employees) often left out of critical funding opportunities. The Fund totaled \$606,000, made 350 grants to Detroit small businesses and represents 1,700 jobs. It was funded by: Quicken Loans Community Fund, DTE Energy Foundation, Invest Detroit, JPMorgan Chase, Desai Sethi Family Foundation, Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, Google, and 113 individual donors.

The second effort - the TechTown Stabilization Fund (TTSF) - closed on May 4th, with 347 grantees receiving a total of \$575,000 in funding. The TTSF also opened up to a broader small business audience, to serve targeted makers, service-based businesses, home-based businesses, freelancers and creative industries based in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park. It was funded by the New Economy Initiative and Bank of America. Together, the two funds funneled approximately \$1.2 million into local small businesses in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

An external advisory committee comprised of partner organizations from around the city supported an internal advisory review board led by TechTown's Director of Technology Programs, Dr. Marlo Rencher for both Funds. The committee included representatives from:

- Invest Detroit
- Independent Business Association
- Osborn Business Association
- Detroit Economic Growth Corporation
- Accounting Aid Society
- East Jefferson Development Corporation
- BUILD Institute
- Michigan Women Forward
- Design Core Detroit
- ProsperUs

Small Business Services

Retail Services

Retail Services is a unique system of care for the metro Detroit retail entrepreneur that brings them retail-specific expertise through classroom training, small group learning and one-on-one coaching. Depending on the needs of the client, these range from one-hour conversations to year-long intensive engagements. Retail Services strives to showcase that sales through brick-and-mortar, online and pop-up events must work together in an omni-channel way that optimizes success and builds viable businesses.

This system of retail support was recently nationally featured in [Ancillary Retailers Magazine](#).

As members of both the National Retail Federation and Michigan Retailers Association, the retail services team at TechTown has been hyper-aware of the changing retail landscape, both pre-COVID and during, both nationally and locally. Crisis Management content added to Retail Boot Camp workbook to assist in helping business owners prepare for not if, but when a crisis happens. Crisis communication methods and case studies have been sourced from post-9/11, 2008 recession and 2020 COVID-19 to highlight continuous examples of business resilience. The retail team is exploring the most strategic method for transitioning, The Shop, its retail pop-up experience to a virtual format. For the second year in a row, the retail design efforts for The Shop will be recognized as a featured event in the UNESCO Detroit Month of Design later this year in September. In order to comply with ever-changing health guidelines and to role model to small businesses how to conduct retail omni-channel operations, the event will most likely be a hybrid digital and in-person experience for participants. This exploration will also serve to help re-think a new model for the Noel Night Winter Art and Retail Market, traditionally a collaboration with the WSU Office of Economic Development and Art and Art History Department.

The Retail Services team has continued to service the vision of operating as an internal retail consulting group to the TechTown team and clients by increasing access to its industry-specific technical assistance available to small businesses through the following:

- Continued collaborative coaching model with SWOT City via 1:1 support for 313 Strong initiative
- Increased public open office hours to support SWOT City 100% transitioning to 313 Strong Initiative
- Launched weekly calls for 130 Retail Boot Camp alumni
- Authored time-sensitive retail subject matter blogs to serve both alumni and public audiences
- Added COVID-related content to TechTown Pinterest page, including marketing best practices
- Increased frequency of alumni newsletter, transitioned to serve both small business and tech alumni

SWOT City

The SWOT City team made a substantial pivot in its small business coaching program to support the ongoing needs for small business owners looking to re-open, stabilize and, for some, possibly close through the end of 2020, as a result of COVID-19. This is a significant project for TechTown and six partners (Accounting Aid Society, Invest Detroit, ProsperUS, Michigan Women Forward, Detroit Development Fund and BUILD Institute) serving nearly 500 business owners in Detroit, Highland Park and Hamtramck. This six month pilot program will serve to help strategically re-shape the SWOT City program methodology and outcomes in 2021 and beyond through the an expanded referral network from the TechTown Stabilization Fund efforts, in working more closely with local

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business service organizations and lenders and in leveraging technology to serve more entrepreneurs more efficiently.

This project supports entrepreneurs whom have received loan relief from our local network of microlenders, are grantees of the DEGC small business relief fund, or are grantees of the TechTown Stabilization Fund through structured coaching and leveraging the resources of the Northern Initiatives *Initiate* platform to help stabilize operations and position business owners for re-opening in a dramatically different business climate, in the coming months.

This project is anchored by a seven member coaching team, including the SWOT City team and with support from TechTown team members Jenifer Daniels and Dawn Batts. Critically, this project also integrates the expertise of team members from the Retail Services and Tech teams, in an incredible demonstration of not only the depth of skills at TechTown, but our ability to come together as a team.

In its first full month of operations, the program has engaged 111 program participants.

WSU Innovation Studio

The WSU Innovation Studio, powered by TechTown, is a collaborative space that sparks a student's entrepreneurial journey through brainstorming, coaching, and training. We are focused on closing the confidence gap needed to launch a new business. This school year we surpassed the goal of 3% of 3500 targeted population (105 students) engaging over 400 students.

We ended the year with the following student entrepreneur success: 16 coaching clients, with School of Business sophomore accepted into TechTown's Launch Detroit Summer 2020 cohort, a recent graduate College of Engineering student accepted into TechTown's Incubator cohort 1, and we awarded \$2,500 in technical assistance services to WSU's STEAM Challenge 2020 winners.

TECH Programs

In March, TechTown's Tech team organized and hosted a "Tech Investing 101" workshop in partnership with Frost Brown Todd Law, Commune Ventures (168 registrants/49 attendees). This was the first in a series of workshops on investing that engages entrepreneurs and investors (emerging and established).

Start Studio, TechTown's idea-stage program for tech companies kicked off its Spring 2020 Cohort on April 15, 2020. This cohort was the largest yet with 20 companies. Three participants are WSU alums: Shardaya Fuquay from Coping Companion, Drake Wilkins of Crowd, and Shaniqua Gibson of Hyper.

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Dr. Dawn Batts (WSU PhD '19) joined the TechTown team as Capital Strategist, assisting our clients with identifying and securing sources of capital in May. She also leads our Business Accelerator Fund program, which secures tens of thousands in grant funding in support of Michigan-based high-growth companies.

The inaugural cohort of Incubator, TechTown's program for high potential, high-growth tech companies, begins on Saturday, May 30. The seven companies that were accepted into this highly competitive 27-week program are AirRands, Detroit Maid/Clean Break, Hexient Solutions, HoopRun, Kaimon, Mayfield Athletics, and Panoptyc.