

Place-Based Economic Development

Placemaking

OED leads collaborative placemaking initiatives to make our campus more active and engaging. Our 2021 projects included placing flexible bistro seating outside the Undergraduate Library and in Woodward | Warren Park (removed for the season on November 1) and coordinating an inspirational art installation in Woodward | Warren Park called “The Path of Encouragement”, which culminated in a Detroit Month of Design featuring TechTown-affiliated small businesses, Wayne State Art & Art History faculty, and a performance by Wayne State Theatre and Dance. We also continued to engage our placemaking community through our PlaceMakers email listserv and Instagram.

Mobility

Wayne State began subsidizing four-hour Dart and annual MoGo passes for all enrolled students, as well as full- and part-time employees on September 1, allowing them to ride DDOT and SMART buses, the QLINE streetcar, and MoGo bikes for free. In the first month, approximately 400 Warriors purchased 2,000 four-hour Dart passes and 700 Warriors signed up for annual MoGo passes taking 2,500 trips. The MoGo stations located at Cass & Hancock and Kirby & Third/Anthony Wayne Drive on/near our campus were the two most trafficked stations in MoGo’s entire system in September.

To promote these new benefits, we offered in-person and virtual Orientation Two sessions, hosted the providers at FestiFall, ran stories in Get Involved and Today@Wayne, and placed posters (print and digital) around campus, including inside the Mike Ilitch School of Business and School of Medicine. Additionally, we are exploring opportunities to advertise our partnerships on the transit systems themselves and recently hired two campus Transportation Ambassadors, paid student assistants, whose job is to help their peers take full advantage of Wayne State’s new mobility benefits.

To participate, Warriors need to download the Dart app and enter an eligibility code, or sign up using their Wayne State email address on a customized MoGo webpage, and follow the instructions provided. Students without smartphones or who prefer a paper pass can pick up a 31-Day Dart pass at The W Food Pantry and Wardrobe. Learn more at go.wayne.edu/waynerides.

10 Year Anniversary

Strategic Planning: OED is charged with developing a university-wide economic development strategy to guide, elevate and communicate Wayne State’s substantial—\$2.4 billion in 2019—annual economic impact. This work is informed by and respond directly to: Wayne State’s 2022-2027 Strategic Plan; national and university-specific economic development best practices; conversations with internal and external stakeholders; and local needs—including those articulated in Detroit Future City’s recently released “The State of Economic Equity in Detroit” report. We anticipate having a complete “Economic

Impact Strategy” in December and hope our work will serve as a model for how universities can help their communities thrive post-pandemic.

Communications Campaign: OED is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. We are celebrating with a communications campaign highlighting University and OED accomplishments. Our campaign officially launched with WSU Giving Day on April 8th. We are currently focused on highlighting our—Wayne State and OED—accomplishments via social, campus and external media: the Today@Wayne and the Today@Wayne podcast, an external press release, and tv and radio interviews. Other campaign deliverables include a video and website update. Through this work we hope to increase our visibility, fundraise and, ultimately, be more impactful in our work.

Media Outreach

In Q3 2021, there were a total of 19 media hits on economic development topics across 22 outlets, representing 6% of the university total and 6% of the university Tier 1 total. There were an additional six hits in Q3 for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program based out of Wayne State.

Highlights and trending topics:

- WSU basketball arena opening (*Detroit News, WXZY, Yahoo News, Saturday Tradition*)
- Free transportation available for all Wayne State students and employees (*Detroit Legal News*)
- TechTown Detroit’s Toast of the Town (*MITechNews*)
- Ned Staebler discussing OED’s 10th anniversary (*WXYZ Spotlight on the News*)
- Goldman Sachs’s 10,000 Small Businesses grad Paralee Boyd in Detroit to start nationwide franchising (*MLive.com., DBusiness*)

OED’s 10th Anniversary Campaign

- Featured as part of Wayne State’s WJR spotlight
- Running mentions on WDET
- [The Encouragement Experience Recap Video](#)

TechTown Programs

Capital Program

On September 30, 2021, TechTown was awarded the Unlocking Angel Capital and Diversifying Angel Investing grant from the EDA. The grant is designed help to inject new capital into the ecosystem by training 200 new Black and other underrepresented angel investors. Dr. Dawn Batts, our team's Capital Strategist is TechTown’s lead on the grant.

We have secured an additional \$21,250 in Business Accelerator Fund (BAF) support on behalf of our clients since August 2021, for a total of \$84,700 for the year.

STEEP Detroit

The balance of the NSF-funded STEEP Detroit program includes speakers, coaching, and access to The Lonely Entrepreneur platform. All participants will complete the program in March 2022.

Start Studio

The Fall 2021 Cohort Start Studio Showcase will be held on November 18. Guest judges will be TechTown Board Member Jamila A Thompson (Ernst and Young), Jeff Ponders with Invest Detroit (and former TechTown Entrepreneur-in-Residence), and Sharon Madison with the Julian C. Madison Building and STEEP founder.

Starting in January 2022, we will split our Start Studio experience into Start Studio: Discovery and Start Studio: MVP. Participants in Start Studio: Discovery will focus on completing ten customer discovery interviews each week so that they can gain insight into their customers' problems and determine their startup's unique value proposition. Start Studio: MVP is focused on helping companies who have completed their initial customer discovery to create revenue-generating early prototypes. Each Start Studio will run twice annually. Applications open for the January 2022 cohort of Start Studio: MVP on November 14, 2021 and close on December 14, 2021.

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

TechTown continues to deliver free, expert resources to the public through flagship programs.

Tech Town Strategy Sessions

We are engaging the Entrepreneurial Community with strategies needed to increase business acumen and development. During a Strategy Session, a TechTown team member helps prioritize business goals and directs entrepreneurs to the appropriate programs and resources based on the entrepreneurs need. We held 80 TechTown Strategy Sessions during the covered period of August 31, 2021 through October 29, 2021.

Ask An Expert

The Ask An expert program provides our business community access to much needed guidance on laser focused topics. Experts are recruited from TechTown's Professional Services Network and from the Detroit entrepreneurial ecosystem. During the covered period of August 31, 2021 and October 29, 2021 we held 37 appointments.

The TechTown Training Series

We continue to work on improving the customer experience for our on-demand professional development workshop series. The TechTown Training series is designed to help entrepreneurs build core business acumen and problem solve real-time business challenges. We added more content to the portal covering Legal Structures, Marketing and Finance.

Content Schedule

There was no presentation in the month of August.

September/October – Reimagining your Brand Strategy

October/November – Marketing Tactics for Social Media

November/December – Get ready for 2021 Tax Season -Taped in November.

We had 32 businesses access the portal from August 30, 2021 to October 29, 2021.

SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES

313 STRONG

The 313 STRONG team has welcomed Marketing and E-Commerce Strategist, Jamesha Lucas, to the team. Jamesha brings eight years of experience in business account management and strategy, relationship management, and C-suite navigational skills, as well as recently being a small business owner herself.

313 STRONG team is working with small business clients to provide technical assistance in financial skills training and website implementation, as well as assisting small business owners in connecting to resources through Strategy Sessions and actively seeking to onboard new clients.

Retail Boot Camp

Retail Boot Camp Alumni, Chantele Jones, celebrated the grand opening of her 6-month popup location in the Grand River Workplace on October 17. Jones is the owner of Estella's Vegan Cuisine and Desserts, the first all-vegan bakery in the city of Detroit, and will be looking for her permanent location in the Grandmont Rosedale neighborhood while the pop-up is open. She has received media attention from many local and national outlets, including [Veg News](#), [Black Enterprise](#), and [Fox 2 news](#).

The Retail Services team continues coaching engagements with 2021 Retail Boot Camp graduates, as well as hosting Strategy Sessions weekly.

The Retail services team hosted The Break Room: Holiday Prep Edition, a virtual roundtable discussion for Retail Boot Camp alumni to gather and share successes, struggles, suggestions and resources. While roundtables are traditionally open-forum, this meeting focused on strategies for maximizing holiday sales.

313 Strong Strategist MayTe Penman partnered with Carrie Vestrand and Christina Devlin, Retail Strategists, to create a series of videos for The SHOP: Virtual Edition, featuring four Latinx-owned businesses in Southwest Detroit. All videos were filmed twice, once in English and once in Spanish, to make the content easily accessible to native-Spanish speakers.

ROAR (Recovery Opportunity Access Resilience) Fund TA/Coaching program

The MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) will be signed soon between Invest Detroit and TechTown Detroit to provide coaching support to their loan clients in Detroit. The first two businesses to participate in this program should come on board in the next few weeks: Toss and Sauce (Pizzeria) and Shears and Shave (Beauty/Barber Shop). Both of these businesses are located on Livernois Ave.

The ROAR loan program is scheduled to launch in January 2022. Once launched, we will provide technical assistance and coaching to Detroit Development Fund, Invest Detroit, Michigan Women Forward, and ProsperUs business clients who apply and close on their ROAR loan.

Business-Based Economic Development Fundraising

Programs @ TechTown

The fundraising outlook for 2021 is still very strong with 94% secured. The pipeline for 2022 is also strong after securing three federal awards that funded multiple years.

The most exciting gift TechTown received in this period was from the Economic Development Association's Build to Scale program. U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, Alejandra Y. Castillo, chose to announce the gift – one of just two in awarded in Michigan – at a press conference at WSU's Industry Innovation Center on 9/30. The award funds a partnership with Ann Arbor SPARK, VentureWell and the Angel Capital Association to train 200 angel investors who are underrepresented in the investor community to address the unacceptable disparity in capital being invested in tech companies founded by Black entrepreneurs and women. The full [press release](#) is here.

TechTown's annual fundraiser, Toast of the Town, was also held 9/30. We achieved more viewers than ever before (1,009) and beat the national benchmark for individual donors who give again after their first gift. For an individual giving program that has only existed three years, we are really pleased to have achieved a higher than national average renewal level.

There are two time-bound activities planned to complete the 2021 annual fund – the Limited Edition Holiday Store and Giving Tuesday. The Limited Edition Holiday Store, in its second year, is a curated collection of eight unique products from TechTown clients, like a soap-making kit from Ilera Apothecary or gift baskets featuring small Black-owned brands from the Black Economic Exchange Group. This fundraising effort doubles as a way to elevate our clients and contribute to their holiday sales.

Office of Economic Development

We are excited about a new strategic plan, still in draft form, and the opportunities it provides to guide the fundraising efforts for the next five years.

The Detroit Revitalization Fellows program – the leadership pipeline of talented mid-career professionals who are equipped with the tools to develop equitable opportunities throughout the economy – received a gift from the Ford Foundation in this period.