



©2014 Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Groundbreaking crowdfunding/matching grant initiative to help Michigan communities create vibrant public spaces

Wednesday, June 25, 2014

[Kathy Fagan \[mailto:fagank@michigan.org?subject=Groundbreaking crowdfunding/matching grant initiative to help Michigan communities create vibrant public spaces\]](mailto:fagank@michigan.org?subject=Groundbreaking%20crowdfunding/matching%20grant%20initiative%20to%20help%20Michigan%20communities%20create%20vibrant%20public%20spaces)

517.335.4590

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) today announced a groundbreaking crowdfunding and matching grant initiative to help drive public space projects in Michigan communities.

“Innovative placemaking efforts help create thriving, sustainable and unique places where workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses want to locate, invest and expand,” said Governor Rick Snyder. “The ability to attract talent and grow businesses is greatly increased when we can take advantage of the unique downtown assets in each of our communities.”

Public Spaces Community Places, a collaborative effort of MEDC, the Michigan Municipal League, and Michigan-based crowdfunding platform Patronicity, is the first program of its kind in the country where local residents can be part of the development of transformational projects in their communities and be backed with a matching grant from MEDC.

The open application process begins July 9 at www.crowdfundingmi.com. [\[http://www.crowdfundingmi.com/\]](http://www.crowdfundingmi.com/) Communities, non-profits and other business entities can submit projects and apply for a crowdfunding campaign through Patronicity with online donations being raised from community members, residents,

and general supporters. Projects meeting fundraising goals would then receive a matching grant from MEDC of up to \$100,000.

“Public Spaces Community Places is a new tool communities can use to help create vibrant public spaces with the potential to bring new vitality to the community and serve as a catalyst for additional economic activity,” said MEDC President and CEO Michael A. Finney. “This is a great way to leverage the pride residents and businesses have in their communities.”

The League designed www.crowdfundingmi.com [<http://www.crowdfundingmi.com/>] as a one-stop website for all the crowdfunding needs of Michigan businesses, investors and communities. It provides resources, how-to information and links to crowdfunding resources.

“We are extremely excited to partner with MEDC and Patronicity to accelerate crowdfunding opportunities for Michigan communities,” said Daniel Gilmartin, CEO and executive director of the Michigan Municipal League. “No other state agency in the nation is doing what MEDC is doing. Its commitment to Michigan communities is unprecedented. We firmly believe this program will inspire and assist communities of all shapes and sizes to take on and complete projects they previously could only dream about.”

The program is available for projects that focus on activation of public spaces such as an outdoor plaza or park enhancements and that have established public awareness and momentum. MEDC, the League, and Patronicity will review and score potential projects based on a number of factors including overall community impact and local financial commitment.

“Crowdfunding has had an incredible impact on the arts in America over the last five years, and with Patronicity we hope to replicate that impact in local communities and public spaces,” said Patronicity Founder & CEO Chris Blauvelt. “This partnership with MEDC is exciting on many levels, but none more so that through crowdfunding MEDC is empowering everyday citizens to have a dramatic impact on their communities. It’s grassroots and government all at once, and we hope a model for how the government can best serve the needs and interests of the community.”

MEDC selected Midtown Detroit Inc.’s Green Alley Project on Selden & Second as the Public Spaces Community Places pilot project. Midtown Detroit is working with Patronicity to raise \$50,000 through crowdfunding to transform the 415-foot-long alley bound by Second Ave., Selden, the Third Ave. Alley, and Alexandrine. Alley enhancements will include a new design to promote walkability and community connectivity and green infrastructure upgrades to reduce the storm water burden on the city’s combined sewer system.

The total cost of the project is \$200,000. Detroit-based Shinola has contributed a

\$100,000 grant. If the project meets its crowdfunding goal, MEDC will provide a matching grant of \$50,000.

Details of the Green Alley Project on Selden & Second and a video can be viewed at www.patronicity.com/project/greenalley [<https://www.patronicity.com/project/greenalley>].

“The idea of creating something sustainable and impactful for the community, like the Selden & Second Green Alley, out of something so blighted, has really resonated in the Midtown community. The partnership with the MEDC on their new Public Spaces Community Places initiative through Patronicity’s crowdfunding platform allows us to utilize a new tool to further engage our local community and leverage dollars already granted by Shinola,” said Susan T. Mosey, president, Midtown Detroit Inc. “We are excited to be the pilot for this new initiative not only for our project but for the others that will follow.”

Pure Michigan is a brand representing business, talent and tourism initiatives across Michigan. These efforts are driven by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, which serves as the state’s marketing arm and lead advocate for business growth, jobs and opportunity with a focus on helping grow Michigan’s economy.

For more on the MEDC and its initiatives, visit [michiganbusiness.org \[#home-intro\]](http://michiganbusiness.org/#home-intro). For Michigan travel news, updates and information, visit [michigan.org](http://www.michigan.org/) [<http://www.michigan.org/>]. Michigan residents interested in seeking employment with any of Michigan’s growing companies should check [mitalent.org](http://www.mitalent.org/) [<http://www.mitalent.org/>], where more than 74,000 jobs are currently available in a variety of industries.

The Michigan Municipal League advocates on behalf of its member communities in Lansing, Washington, D.C., and the courts; provides educational opportunities for elected and appointed municipal officials; and assists municipal leaders in administering services to their communities through League programs and services.

Patronicity supports building vibrant communities by connecting small businesses, organizations and events with local patrons and sponsors to help them grow, one project at a time.

###

©2014 Michigan Economic Development Corporation
300 N. Washington Sq., Lansing, MI 48913
888.522.0103
