



Endorsed and ratified by Edison  
Neighborhood Association October 23, 2014

### Washington Square Redevelopment Vision

**Vision:** A restored vibrant and active neighborhood commercial node in Washington Square that is welcoming and unique and sets Washington Square apart as a “destination place” in Kalamazoo and also serves as a neighborhood node for residents to gather and visit and stay connected to their neighborhood.

**Background:** Prior to a period of disinvestment and decline occurring around the 1980s, Washington Square existed as a vibrant neighborhood commercial node with occupied storefronts. “A place to run into neighbors and business associates as well as take care of shopping or other needs”. Significant improvement has taken place over the last decade including removal of blight and the development of the Market Place, 23 high quality architecturally appropriate new homes near the Farmers Market. Additional neighborhood opportunities are planned with the planned \$42 health and wellness campus emphasizing food production and sustainability and the new WMU medical school. From 2013 through present, partners have come together to host several community Art Hop events, inviting hundreds to engage with business and community-building activities in Washington Square.

- Goals:**
- Attract viable businesses and uses to commercial and retail spaces that will restore vibrancy at Washington Square and provide unique opportunities for commerce – places for people to eat, shop, visit and learn.
  - Attract businesses that will animate the streets and sidewalks of Washington Square promoting walkability and connections with nearby anchors such as the WMU medical school and health and wellness campus.
  - Provide green relief, support sustainability and promote environmental stewardship concepts where possible with improvements such as plantings, bike racks, and/or opportunities for rain barrels.
  - Calm traffic on Portage increasing pedestrian and bike safety and supporting the viability of new businesses by helping to slow vehicular traffic allowing for greater notice of new businesses and amenities.
  - Incorporate community informed streetscape, façade and/or art improvements on the block.
  - Explore opportunities to foster a creative hub in Washington Square which might include local foods, local business support and/other creative services/activities.
  - Host active use of the space through festivals or community events which are both welcoming to existing residents and bring additional visitors from the wider community.