



Royal Oak  
**DOWNTOWN**  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

# ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2021

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority allocated \$2M to provide financial relief for business owners, a buy-local program for residents, and marketing campaigns, targeted towards patrons, welcoming them back to Downtown Royal Oak.



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# From the office of the Executive Director

Downtown Royal Oak is a **vibrant, walkable, and centrally located destination** rich with history that offers Royal Oak residents and visitors from across the state an abundance of memorable experiences to enjoy.

**Everyone is welcome here.** People are looking for businesses that align with their style, interests, and beliefs, and with so many different kinds of businesses in Downtown Royal Oak, it is easy for them to find one that caters to their specific needs and wants. And because of this, residents rally around these local establishments and have pride in their Downtown. When visitors come to Downtown Royal Oak they feel this energy and want to choose to spend more of their time here.

Residents and visitors are looking to soak up **enjoyable experiences**, and they're finding those options in Royal Oak. With a strong community, unique and creative retail shops, family-friendly restaurants and breweries, entertainment venues that feature comedy, live music, and performances, and green space, Downtown Royal Oak is a place where people can spend an entire day or weekend.

As we continue to evolve into the future we'll keep our long-held value firmly in place: **Downtown Royal Oak is a community where people come together for entertaining and meaningful experiences.**

**Tim Thwing**, Executive Director, Royal Oak



# Mission

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The mission of the Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority is to promote economic growth and revitalization in Downtown Royal Oak. And in Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic showed us how important it is to support our businesses through this time, and together, work towards achieving our mission.

The Royal Oak DDA is able to accomplish this mission by improving and maintaining a solid and visitor-friendly infrastructure, marketing downtown Royal Oak to consumers and businesses, and encouraging preservation of Royal Oak's Downtown Development District. By fulfilling this mission, we're able to enhance the viability of not only the downtown region, but the entire City of Royal Oak.

The development plan, created by the Downtown Development Authority, prioritizes physical improvements like façades, buildings, parking lots and decks, streetscapes, and infrastructure. Additionally, the Royal Oak DDA has built up its marketing and communication channels and extended its reach to promote local businesses. This includes advertising, marketing, public relations, signage and banners, street lighting, and tree and floral arrangements. A portion of the DDA's funds go towards extra police officers for the district to enhance existing public safety efforts. Funding has also been provided from other state and federal programs for improvements to the Royal Oak Downtown Development District.

# Goals

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**Safety:** To protect the residents, businesses, and visitors of Downtown Royal Oak.

**Promotion:** To promote Downtown Royal Oak as a premier destination for shopping, dining, entertainment, living, and working.

**Infrastructure:** To provide a downtown that is clean and well maintained.

**Development:** To encourage development in downtown through programs and TIF (tax increment financing) reimbursement.

**Parking:** To provide adequate and safe parking for downtown residents, employees, and visitors.

**Public:** To keep the public informed of the DDA's activities.



# Rebound Royal Oak Small Business Recovery Program

Downtown Royal Oak established the Rebound Royal Oak Small Business Recovery Program to provide aid to small businesses within the Royal Oak Downtown Development District impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and related executive orders and emergency declarations.

**\$2M**

The full program funding, allocated to provide financial relief for business owners, a buy-local program for residents, and marketing campaigns, targeted towards patrons, welcoming them back to Downtown Royal Oak.

**\$1.3M**

Portion of the funding awarded to small businesses in the Downtown Development District.

**92**

Restaurants, retail shops, salons, cafes, and entertainment venues received grants.

All eligible applicants that applied received a grant, with amounts ranging from \$4,000 (minimum award) to \$32,000 (maximum award). The formula for calculating the totals awarded to eligible businesses was based on four factors:

- 1** Square footage was weighted at 60 percent of the award total.
- 2** Rent was weighted at 30 percent of the award total.
- 3** Average monthly payroll hours were weighted at 10 percent of the award total.
- 4** The length of time a business has been in operation in Downtown Royal Oak under current ownership was also taken into account; a longevity bonus provided qualifying businesses with \$500 for every additional five years they have been in the Downtown Development District beyond 10 years.

*Initiatives were solely funded from the DDA's own funds. The DDA received funds from the sale of a large parcel of land at Woodward Avenue and Interstate 696 to a development firm, who recently constructed The Griffin. Additionally, other developments in the downtown, including Henry Ford, the Hyatt Place Hotel, and Etkin Real Estate Solutions have contributed to an increase in tax revenues to the DDA. Reinvesting real estate gains back into the community during the pandemic was a top DDA priority.*



# Downtown Dollars

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When Downtown Royal Oak began reopening in the summer of 2020, the Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority and its Board launched the Downtown Dollars gift card program as a way to support local businesses, welcome residents and guests back to Downtown Royal Oak, and encourage people to shop, dine, enjoy a spa day, or get a coffee locally.

The Downtown Dollars made an impact on the economic stability of its businesses and brought patrons back to the Downtown Development District.

**70+**

restaurants, retail shops, cafes, salons, and entertainment venues accept Downtown Dollars.

**\$400,000**

given to consumers for FREE to kick-off the Downtown Dollars program in July 2020.

**\$100,000**

additional was given for FREE to consumers through social media contests and for signing up for the DDA's consumer-facing newsletter, RO in the Know.

**\$548,660**

in Downtown Dollars gift cards redeemed at participating businesses.

Downtown Dollars come in the form of an electronic gift card that is emailed to recipients to be used at participating establishments. Gift cards can be redeemed for online and curbside pickup orders or in-person.

*Funds being allocated for the Downtown Dollars campaign were part of the \$2 million that was utilized for the Rebound Royal Oak Small Business Assistance program.*

*The Royal Oak DDA partnered with Yiftee, an eGift card service company.*



COME IN!  
WE ACCEPT  
ROYAL OAK  
DOWNTOWN  
DOLLARS

[downtownroyaloak.org](http://downtownroyaloak.org)

Royal Oak  
DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY





CONDADO  
TACOS • TEQUILA • MARGARITAS

YES, WE'RE OPEN

#INTHETOGETHER

310

# Main Street Forward Award

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**The impact the Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority had on small businesses in the Downtown Development District during the COVID-19 pandemic, caught the attention of Main Street America.**

**In April of 2021, the Royal Oak DDA was just one of six downtowns across the country, and the only community in Michigan, to win a coveted Main Street Forward Award, selected by Main Street America.**

**The establishment of the Rebound Royal Oak Small Business Assistance Program in March of 2020 and the creation of the Downtown Dollars gift card program, led to the Royal Oak DDA being selected and this countrywide recognition.**

**As a recipient of the Main Street Forward Award, the Royal Oak DDA was recognized at the Main Street 2021 virtual conference, held on Monday, April 12, 2021.**

**“The business recovery program established by the Downtown Development Authority is the most impactful project we have ever implemented, and we are honored to be recognized by Main Street America,” said Sean Kammer, former downtown manager for Royal Oak. “The grants and the Downtown Dollars program are helping to make sure all businesses are successful, and that Downtown Royal Oak continues to evolve into the future. We have heard from so many that these programs saved their business - and it’s amazing to see what can be accomplished when a community comes together.”**

**Main Street America, a program of the National Main Street Center, has historically selected the country’s best examples of comprehensive commercial district revitalization each year. Given the events in 2020, Main Street America decided to take a different approach to this round of awards, and created the Main Street Forward Awards, which honored six communities that serve as examples for the network, and for the country at large, of the power and perseverance of Main Street.**

# Events + Activities

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To promote economic growth and revitalization, the DDA activates campaigns, and partners with local organizations to encourage visitors and residents to come Downtown to support its local businesses and experience Downtown Royal Oak.

## **Campaigns and initiatives include:**

### **Free Structure Parking | July + August 2020**

DDA funds were allocated to provide free parking in all downtown parking structures. **DDA support = \$200,000**

### **Arts, Beats & Eats Drive-in Concert | September 4 - 7, 2020**

To help support local music talent impacted by COVID-19, the DDA partnered with Arts, Beats & Eats to host the drive-in concert series. **DDA support = \$50,000**

### **Art in the Alley | Thursdays in October in 2020**

To drive traffic to Downtown Royal Oak, the Royal Oak DDA and the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce hosted an open-art stroll, featuring different artists each week. **DDA support = \$5,000**

### **Holiday Tree Lighting | December 3, 2020**

The Royal Oak DDA and the Royal Oak Farmers Market partnered for this annual event to kick-off the holiday season. **DDA support = \$5,000**

### **Holiday Jingle Marketplace | December 12, 2020**

To encourage shopping local, the Royal Oak DDA and the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce partnered for this 1st annual event. **DDA support = \$5,000**

### **Drive-In Menorah Lighting | December 13, 2020**

The drive-in menorah lighting was hosted by the Royal Oak Jewish Center, giving people the opportunity to come together to celebrate the power of light. **DDA support = \$5,400**

### **Royal Oak in Bloom | May 9, 2021**

The annual Mother's Day flower and plant sale featured more than 70 vendors. **DDA support = \$10,000**

### **The Art of Fire | June 12 - 13, 2021**

Nearly 10,000 people enjoyed 100 artists who work with clay, glass, or metal. **DDA support = \$10,000**

### **Rock 'n' Rides | June 17 - 20, 2021**

Family-friendly event in Downtown Royal Oak featured carnival rides, family fun, kids stage, and live music.

**DDA support = \$35,000**



# Business Overview

Downtown Royal Oak is a vibrant community where residents and visitors come together for entertaining and meaningful experiences. The Downtown Development District consists of:



**45**  
Retail Stores



**58**  
Restaurants + Breweries



**8**  
Cafes + Coffee Shops



**4**  
Ice Cream Shops +  
Bakeries



**21**  
Hair Salons, Spas +  
Nail Salons



**7**  
Entertainment Venues



**4**  
Fitness Studios



**4**  
Personal Care Services



**109**  
Professional Service  
Businesses



**1**  
Hotel



**142**  
Total Acreage of the  
Downtown Development  
District



**4,000**  
Parking Spaces

*(includes on-street parking, parking structures, and surface lots)*



# Physical Improvements

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The Royal Oak DDA takes great pride in taking care of the Downtown Development District so all businesses, residents, and guests feel welcome here. To achieve this, physical improvements included:

**Center Street parking deck (build-out of commercial spaces) = \$660,000**

**Alley improvements = \$100,000**

**3rd Street streetscape = \$140,000**

**Colored/stamped concrete on 2nd Street = \$16,908**

**Construction of surface parking lot at 217 Knowles Street = \$310,000**

**Decorative street lights = \$1,100,000**

**Concrete paver replacement = \$1,000,000**

**5th Street electrical power upgrades = \$70,000**

**Centennial Commons and surrounding streetscape = annual debt service of \$737,000**

**Parking deck at 2nd Street and Center Street = annual debt service of \$583,780**

**Bike rack replacement = \$2,100**

**Façade grants = \$50,000**

# Maintenance

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Regular maintenance of the Downtown Development District included:

Power washing sidewalks; removal of debris, litter, graffiti, etc.; removal of weeds; mulching and preparation of landscape; lawn clean-up preparation; lawn fertilizing; lawn mowing; street and alley sweeping; planting, maintaining, and watering of landscape; lawn mowing; and removal of plant material from landscaping.

**Total fee = \$373,134.98**



# Financials

DESCRIPTION	AMENDED BUDGET	2020-21	06.30.2021
<b>Fund 247 - DDA DEVELOPMENT FUND</b>			
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Property Tax Revenues	\$4,707,000.00	\$4,988,288.92	
Interest	\$70,000.00	\$14,382.13	
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$34,430.00	\$35,480.00	
USE OF FUND BALANCE	\$6,345,230.00	\$3,169,809.17	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$11,156,660.00</b>	<b>\$8,207,960.22</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Wages + Benefits	\$191,853.12	\$231,389.94	
Operational	\$79,720.00	\$44,615.05	
Misc Contracted Services	\$6,003,610.00	\$3,135,834.61	
Main St Committee - Design	\$50,000.00	\$24,882.00	
Main St Committee - Promotion	\$580,000.00	\$435,511.24	
Main St Committee - Business Development	\$1,945,700.00	\$1,368,466.14	
Transfer To General Fund	\$737,000.00	\$737,000.00	
Transfer To Public Safety	\$540,000.00	\$540,000.00	
Transfer To Auto Parking	\$783,780.00	\$1,446,701.43	
Miscellaneous Expenditures	\$245,000.00	\$243,559.81	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$11,156,663.12</b>	<b>\$8,207,960.22</b>	
<b>Fund 247 - DDA DEVELOPMENT FUND:</b>			
TOTAL REVENUES	\$11,156,660.00	\$8,207,960.22	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$11,156,663.12	\$8,207,960.22	
<b>NET OF REVENUES &amp; EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>(3.12)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	
<b>BEG. FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$6,772,422.65</b>	<b>\$6,772,422.65</b>	
<b>END FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$6,772,422.65</b>	<b>\$3,602,613.48</b>	

# Financials

DESCRIPTION	AMENDED BUDGET	2020-21	06/30/2021
<b>Fund 248 - DDA OPERATING FUND</b>			
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Property Tax Revenues	\$51,000.00	\$50,577.33	
Interest	\$1,000.00	\$375.39	
Use Of Fund Balance	\$25,880.00	\$0.00	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$77,880.00</b>	<b>\$50,952.72</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Wages + Benefits	\$57,886.45	\$36,803.58	
Office Supplies	\$500.00	\$85.28	
Trees, Shrubs, and Plants	\$500.00	\$0.00	
Miscellaneous Operating Supplies	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	
Misc Contracted Services	\$10,000.00	\$11,566.57	
Telephone Service	\$1,000.00	\$1,304.24	
Training + Education	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	
Travel Costs	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	
Advertising + Legal Notices	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	
Bank Service Charges + Fees	\$0.00	\$71.31	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$77,886.45</b>	<b>\$49,830.98</b>	
<b>Fund 248 - DDA OPERATING FUND:</b>			
TOTAL REVENUES	\$77,880.00	\$50,952.72	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$77,886.45	\$49,830.98	
<b>NET OF REVENUES &amp; EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>(6.45)</b>	<b>\$1,121.74</b>	
<b>BEG. FUND BALANCE</b>	\$120,895.18	\$120,895.18	
<b>END FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$120,895.18</b>	<b>\$122,016.92</b>	



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**[Downtownroyaloak.org](http://Downtownroyaloak.org)**

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