

DOWNTOWN AKRON QUARTERLY UPDATE



1ST QUARTER 2021
DOWNTOWN AKRON SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Akron Named to Top Ten Metros for Minority-Owned Businesses in the U.S.

City of Akron press release, Mar. 2021

The City of Akron has been named one of the Top Ten Best Metros for Minority-Owned Businesses by Lantern, a SoFi Lending Corp. company. This announcement comes as a result of the dedication and commitment of the City of Akron and its partners to make actionable changes in recent years and invest in Black-owned businesses.

To address issues surrounding the creation and growth of Black-owned businesses in Akron, the City made investments in five key areas of focus. New investments were made in the Bounce Innovation Hub and associated programming, and in the Minority Contractors Capital Access Program, in partnership with Summit County and Western Reserve Community Fund. This program provides access to SBA-backed bonding and capital for labor, material and bonding costs for historically marginalized businesses in the construction, architectural, engineering, landscaping and similar industries.

Additional investments were made in the Akron Resiliency Fund, in partnership with the Western Reserve Commu-

nity Fund, which provides low-interest loans for business start-ups and small businesses' payroll, working capital, equipment and debt refinance costs; the Great Streets program, which targets investment in 12 City neighborhood business districts, home primarily to locally owned small businesses; and finally, Rubber City Match, which seeks to aid entrepreneurs in launching their business in a vacant neighborhood storefront.

"Over three years ago, the City of Akron partnered with the County of Summit, Greater Akron Chamber and GAR Foundation to embark on an initiative to improve their collective economic development ecosystem and drive business growth and economic opportunity within the Greater Akron region," said Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan. "The key component of the Elevate Akron initiative is ensuring core strategies are aligned and integrated. One of the major areas where we are seeing success is driving new Black-owned business start-ups."

[Click here to read the release on downtownakron.com](#)

Downtown Small Businesses and Storefronts in the News

Focus on Black-owned business: Breakfast food meets chicken joint in shared downtown Akron spot, by Sean McDonnell, Akron Beacon Journal: Breakfast in Bed By LaCole [Suddeth-Odums] is sharing space with Smack Yo Mamma, a chicken spot on East Market Street. The two businesses decided their restaurants with offset hours could work out of the same kitchen. [READ MORE](#)

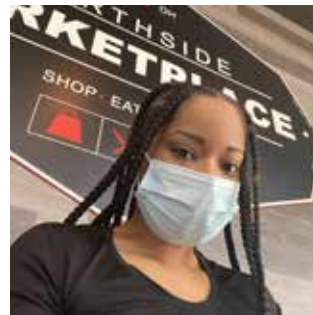


Focus on Black-owned business: Healing people through massage therapy, by Seyma Bayram, Akron Beacon Journal: A health crisis nearly two decades ago led Sonya Lee [owner of Let's Heal Massage Therapy] to discover her passion for healing others through massage therapy. [READ MORE](#)

Focus on Black-owned Businesses: Akron's Tea Lady is third of five generations of entrepreneurs, by Krista S. Kano, Akron Beacon Journal: "I wanted people to come for more than just the food. I wanted them to come for the experience because the experience is what will keep you coming back," [Renea Woods Baylor] said. [READ MORE](#)

Focus on Black-owned businesses: Mizz Shakesum's bottled nutrition tastes like dessert! by Amanda Garrett,

Akron Beacon Journal: The pink, purple, yellow and chocolatey-looking concoctions in Mizz Shakesum's refrigerator at Northside Marketplace look like decadent treats.



And they taste like ice cream sundaes, pina colodas, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. [READ MORE](#)

Focus on Black-owned businesses: BizzyBeads Boutique gets creative with food, polymer clay and resin, by Amanda Garrett, Akron Beacon

Journal: People who saw her [Bizzy Beads owner, Kimberly Camp] and her family wearing the sparkly creations wanted to buy them. Soon, she was making other jewelry and decided to launch a business, Bizzy Beads Boutique. Bizzy, she said, is a nod to her maiden name, Bizzell. [READ MORE](#)

Ohio Tea Lady brings the magic of tea time to Akron residents, by Jade Jarvis, WEWS, Newschannel 5: The COVID-19 pandemic has been tough for small businesses, but one Summit County woman used downtime during the pandemic to build up her business and expand. Now, she's introducing more and more people to the magic of tea time. [Watch the segment here.](#)

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Small Businesses and Storefronts in the News (con't)

Akron Dish: Valentine's Day perfect time to Indulge at Main Street chocolate shop, by Katie Byard, Akron Beacon Journal: The brothers figured they could set their ice cream shop apart by offering creative flavors that regularly change. There are seven signature flavors always available, such as VanillaCloud, Chocolate Chip and Cookies and Lavender Queen Bee. [READ MORE](#)

Mayor Horrigan Visits Essential Dipped Delights: "I've always had an entrepreneur's spirit, so I was like 'I'm going to make this my business.'" Takila Nuss of Essential Dipped Delights spoke with Mayor Horrigan recently about her business, being an entrepreneur and what the future may hold. [Watch the conversation here.](#)

Akron Ice Cream Shop Rolls Out Unique Treats, by Jenna Jordan, Spectrum News 1: For Cassandra Morrison, there's art in

ice cream. "I really think rolled ice cream is really cool because it's really beautiful," she said. Morrison co-owns the Treatery, and mixes each order with care. "It is so much fun," she said. "Honestly, definitely one of the funnest jobs I've ever had, and ice cream brings joy to people." [Watch the segment here.](#)



Nomz Sandwich Shop Experiences Success through COVID-19, by Summer Torok, The Buchtelite: Are you looking for a new restaurant with vegan options and locally sourced ingredients?

In 2018, Cassandra Morrison was self-employed with her first business which brought her to Northside Marketplace. While Morrison worked the front desk, she noticed a trend of people looking for somewhere to get lunch. After convincing her fiancé Sam Lavictoire, they opened Nomz and it has been a hit ever since. [READ MORE](#)

DAP Supports Small Business

Carry Out Zones

During the COVID-19 shut down, DAP worked with the city of Akron to provide carry out zones for downtown retailers. During the next few weeks, signage will be replaced to include the need to use emergency flashers. As traffic is restored, new parking meters go into place, and temporary free parking zones begin to disappear, adherence to the carry out zone parameters will become increasingly important.

COVID-19 Protective Equipment

We've come a long way since the shut down! *If your DAP-provided distancing signage or equipment needs refreshed, please contact Kimberly Beckett, Director of Business Relations at kbeckett@downtownakron.com.*

City of Akron Downtown Storefront Relief Grant

The grant is designed to support downtown small business storefronts and help them recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Qualifying businesses can apply until June 1, 2021. For application and grant guidelines, click [here](#)

Restaurant Relief

The restaurant business remains one of the most challenging businesses to operate. Impacts of the pandemic, from

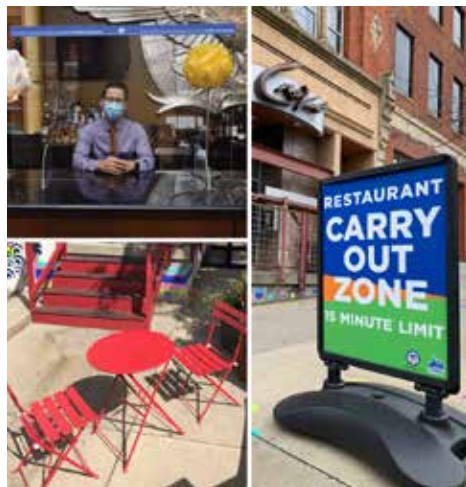
health compliance to supply chain and staffing challenges, continue to threaten the sustainability of the industry that brings character, culture, vibrancy and value to downtown's street level storefronts. To help, the U.S. Small

Business Administration has posted [this chart](#) which illustrates cross-program eligibility for SBA COVID-19 relief options: if you applied for or received aid from one program (such as PPP, for example), you may be eligible for aid/benefits from another (such as the Restaurant Revitalization Fund). [Find out more about the Restaurant Revitalization Fund \(RRF\).](#)

Temporary Patio Permit Extension at City Council May 3

Last year, the city of Akron consolidated their patio permitting process to better serve food retailers looking to expand out of doors during the pandemic. This year, the city hopes to continue the program. The legis-

lation will be presented to Akron City Council on May 3rd. DAP will continue to support small business outdoor patios with our bistro table program. *If you are interested in participating, contact Kimberly Beckett, Director of Business Relations at kbeckett@downtownakron.com.*



VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Akron's 22 Exchange Building to Convert from Student Housing

By Dan Shingler, Crain's Akron Business, Jan. 2021

The renovation project will convert the space to modern-market-rate apartments—236 units in all—for those seeking downtown living.

Downtown Akron is getting a new round of apartments that are expected to come online next year, thanks to the redevelopment of a major student housing complex.

The project is at the corner of South Main and Exchange streets in what's known as 22 Exchange—a student housing project that went into foreclosure and was subsequently sold last year.

The buyer, Alabama's Capstone Real Estate Investments, is converting the building to market-rate apartments that it plans to begin leasing next year, said Capstone principal and executive vice president Christopher Mouron.

"The entire property will be transformed, much of which is centered around enlarging bedrooms, creating kitchens, additional storage space and expanding bedroom closets while also changing the unit count," Mouron said.

[Click here to read the story on craincleveland.com](https://www.craincleveland.com)

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Beachside Villa for \$150/n
nevermaps.com

Akron's Bounce Innovation Hub is Cultivating a Software Accelerator with Diverse Founders

By Dan Shingler, Crain's Akron Business, Jan. 2021

The tech software sector has struggled with diversity, traditionally being dominated by white males. But the software accelerator at Akron's Bounce Innovation Hub is bucking that trend.

"It's a very diverse group—three female founders and four persons of color," said Jeanine Black, Bounce's chief marketing officer, referring to the accelerator's current enrollment.

And that's with only six companies in the accelerator, which is a three-month, renewable, mentorship-driven program for early stage startups.

The companies' founders are a diverse group, whether you measure by race, gender, age, experience or even product offerings.

What they have in common is a need for help. Most are not software developers themselves, but they have unique ideas on how to use software for new businesses.

[Click here to read the story on craincleveland.com](https://www.craincleveland.com)



VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Akron's Lock 3 Park Almost Halfway to \$10 Million Fundraising Goal

By Dan Shingler, Crain's Akron Business, Feb. 2021

Downtown Akron is nearly halfway to its goal of raising \$10 million for its Lock 3 Park and entertainment venue, thanks to a \$1 million gift from the Richard S. and Alita Rogers Family Foundation.

The city and the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition announced the gift last week.

Along with \$1.5 million from the city, a \$2 million grant from the Knight Foundation and a \$400,000 anonymous donation, the Rogers' donation brings the total raised for Lock 3 to \$4.9 million.

The city, coalition and other downtown advocates are raising the money to fund the Lock 3 Vision Plan. The plan aims to redevelop the site, known by many as Akron's Central Park, with an amphitheater and lawn surrounded by garden paths, skating areas, shaded seating, artwork and game terraces.

[Click here to read the full story on crainscleveland.com](#)

Lock 3 2021 Summer Concert and Event Schedule

Filled with evening concerts, festivals, and more than 40 community events, Lock 3's summer schedule was crafted to bring back safe community entertainment, following all directives currently in place to provide top-notch experiences for the entire family.

Rock the Lock every Friday in June through August featuring your favorite tribute bands. Gates open at 6 p.m., and concerts begin at 7 p.m.

Saturday Night Music brings national and local R&B, Soul, Funk and Hip-Hop to the lock, beginning June 12.

Family Movie Night

Join us on Sunday evenings this summer and enjoy a special theme starting at 8 p.m. followed by a movie. Bring a blanket, learn fire safety, healthy eating and more, and then enjoy a movie under the stars. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Additional events include **Alternative Nights** with the jenY 107.3 every Thursday in June through August with radio station jenY, 107.3 FM, from 7 to 10 p.m. with yard games, drink specials, music and more.

[View the current list of performers, dates and events at Lock3Live.com.](#)



VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Akron City Council Approves \$2.95M in Improvements to Canal Park

By Robin Goist, Cleveland.com, Mar. 2021

City Council moved swiftly on Monday to unanimously approve \$2.95 million for improvements to Canal Park, the downtown baseball field home to the Akron RubberDucks.

Some repairs to the stadium will take place before the 2021 season starts on May 4, and other renovations—including new seating—are scheduled for the off-season leading up to 2022's opening day.

"It's getting to the point where these improvements that are needed are basically caused by water damage," Service Director Chris Ludle said of the \$200,000 in sealing and concrete repairs slated for completion before May 4. About \$2.7 million will cover new seats, their installation and related concrete repairs.

The city owns Canal Park and has a 30-year lease with the RubberDucks. The minor league team has made \$8.1 million in improvements to the park since 2012, RubberDucks owner Ken Babby told Council's Public Service Committee.

"Those are non-taxpayer-paid private improvements to create our Tiki Terrace, renovating the suite level, creating the Duck Club, opening the game grill and bar and our Fowl Territory picnic space," Babby said.

[Click here to read the full story on cleveland.com](#)

3,600 Fans Per Game Approved For May Home Games; Additional, Tickets For May 4 Opening Day Now Available

Opening Day 2021 is May 4 and features the Akron RubberDucks vs the Binghamton Rumble Ponies. Game time is 7:05 p.m. The game is the start of a 6-game home stand versus the Rumble Ponies, from May 4 - May 9.

Opening Day is "May the QUACK be with you" Fan Appreciation Night, with May the Fourth Fireworks. It is also Free T-Shirt Tuesday, and Craft Beer Tuesday. Each Tuesday features a different T-Shirt Giveaway to the first 1,000 fans.

Every Tuesday a local craft brewery will feature their products at Canal Park.

Union Home Mortgage welcomes you home to Canal Park and will be giving out prizes all game long to the best fans in all of baseball! |

[Click here to view the Ducks' Schedule and buy tickets](#)

[Click here to view the 2021 promotions schedule](#)

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Development Finance Authority Unveils New Website, with a Fun Real Estate Tool

By Dan Shingler, *Crain's Cleveland Business*, Feb. 2021

The Development Finance Authority of Summit County has a new website. But be warned, it's a fascinating time suck ... if you're a real estate and development nerd.

The DFA unveiled its new online face on Wednesday, Feb. 3. It's meant to help folks understand the agency and the various forms of financing it works with, including bond, tax-credit, energy-efficiency financing and sources of traditional credit for small businesses and nonprofits.

But if you're just trying to stay on top of some of Northeast Ohio's development efforts, the website's map will likely pull you in. It shows all of the projects DFA has worked on across 15 counties—129 of them. Click on a site marked on the map, and it shows you what the project is, its address, what sort of financing it has via the DFA, and how much.

It's likely to be a helpful tool for a lot of folks involved in real estate and development, and we're sure it's going to be helpful to journalists who follow those topics.

[Click here to read the story on crainsclevelandbusiness.com](#)

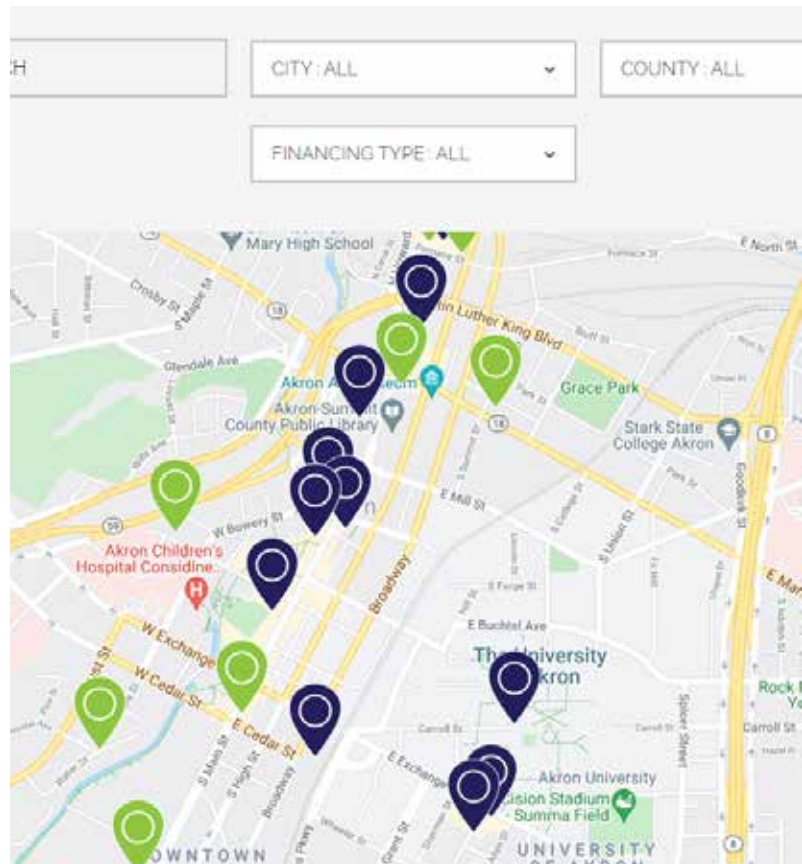
Meet the 2021 Cohort of Scalerator NEO

The fifth cohort of Scalerator NEO—a proven, results-driven program to help entrepreneurial leaders quickly, profitably, and sustainably grow their business—launched on March 18 & 19 as a six-month virtual experience.

Fourteen companies from five Northeast Ohio counties were selected to participate in the 2021 cohort of Scalerator NEO at no cost to them. The participating companies represent a cross-section of the region's business communities, with a mix of manufacturers, service providers, construction, and tech, averaging roughly \$8 million in sales and 45 full-time employees. Overall, this cohort of companies represents over \$100 million in sales and 627 full-time employees. State & Federal Communications of downtown Akron are included in the cohort.

Scalerator NEO is a six-month, cohort-based educational program for entrepreneurs and leaders who want to deliver immediate growth to their businesses and are open to learning new ways to achieve this goal. With a focus on the 3 Cs of growth (Customers, Capacity and Cash), Scalerator touts impressive results, with 75% of participating companies increasing their growth by 25% or more following completion of the program.

[Click here to find out more](#)



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VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Echogen Hopes New Deal Lights a Fire Under Its Heat Engine Business

By Dan Shingler, Crain's Akron Business, Feb. 2021

Akron's Echogen Power Systems has been working for more than 10 years to bring its heat-to-energy technology to market, quietly raising an impressive amount of capital and perfecting its system with projects demonstrating its know-how along the way.

It might have just made the breakthrough it's been hoping to achieve. In February, the company licensed its technology to Germany's Siemens Energy, which will deploy Echogen's "heat engine" to take waste heat from a TC (TransCanada) Energy natural gas pipeline and turn it into 9.3 megawatts of electricity, said Echogen co-founder and CEO Philip Brennan.

"The goal is to show that it will generate the amount of power we said it would," Brennan said. "We're hopeful that will allow us to leverage this into other opportunities. ... It's a big deal."

Siemens Energy sees the technology as part of its efforts to capture the green-energy market and is confident Echogen's technology will deliver..

"Siemens Energy's interest in the Echogen technology stems from our focus around decarbonization. Emission-free waste-heat-to-power is one of the approaches we've been pursuing, and the Echogen technology is an enabler in that direction," said Thomas Soulas, head of Emerging Technology, via email.

[Click here to read the full story on crainscleveland.com](#)

Akron City Council Approves Cap on What DoorDash, GrubHub, Uber Can Charge Restaurants

By Doug Livingston, Akron Beacon Journal, Mar. 2021

Akron City Council unanimously approved a 15% cap on the fees that companies like DoorDash, GrubHub and Uber charge restaurants.

Council heard last week from two restaurants and a representative of the Ohio Restaurant Association who said the tech companies charge restaurants as much as 30% of the bill to deliver food while discouraging their clients from raising prices. With consumer demand for delivery spiking in the pandemic, restaurants owners say the delivery fees can be greater than the profits on some of their meals.

"We believe it's in the city's best interest, along with major cities throughout Ohio and the country," said At-Large Councilman Jeff Fusco.

[Click here to read the full story on ohio.com](#)



VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

New to the Menu During COVID-19: Virtual Eateries

By Kelly Byer, Canton Repository, Feb. 2021

There's no storefront for Outlaw Burger. No dining room for Monster Mac. No servers at Crave Burger.

The menu items for all three restaurants are made in the kitchen of Crave in downtown Akron. The upscale eatery partners with Nextbite, a company with a dozen delivery-only brands, in a setup commonly referred to as a virtual or ghost kitchen.

"None of these brands have an actual brick-and-mortar," Crave's General Manager Jeff Kucko said.

The business models and terms might differ from one place to the next, but the common thread is a restaurant without a physical location and a menu designed for delivery through third-party apps, such as DoorDash, Grubhub and Uber Eats.

Some restaurants have partnered with delivery-focused companies to serve their virtual brands, other restaurants are working with brands developed by their parent companies, and then there are commercial or shared kitchen spaces available for restaurants to rent.

Crave's arrangement keeps Nextbite's more "affordable" brands—one of which coincidentally included the name "Crave"—separate while keeping existing kitchen staff busy and rotating food, thereby making it fresher for customers. Crave also makes 45% to 50% of the profits.

"We did this to hopefully tap into some of the University of Akron market, the younger people especially," he said.

[Click here to read the full story on cantonrep.com](#)

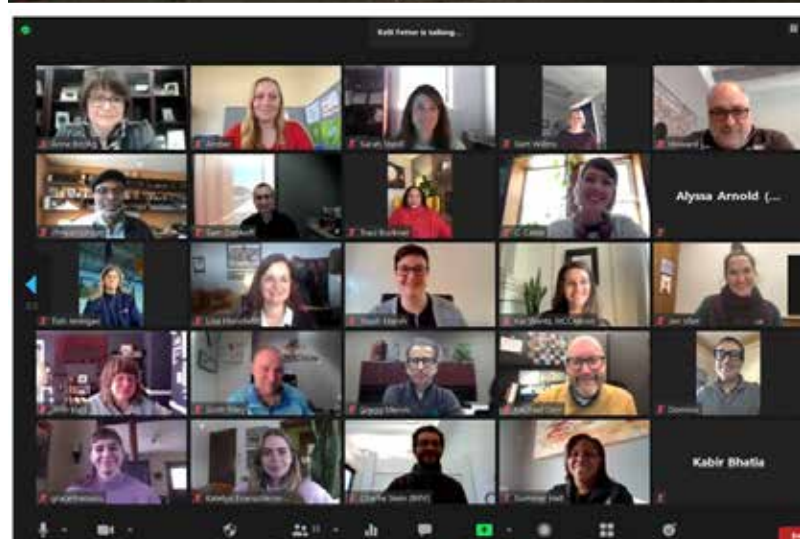
Downtown Akron Leaders Hopeful for a Better Summer in 2021

by Kabir Bhatia, 89.7 WKSU, Feb. 2021

Although numerous Akron events were canceled in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, community leaders are more optimistic about the prospect of being able to host activities in 2021.

The Akron RubberDucks and the Pride Festival are slated to be back this year after social distancing concerns scuttled plans last summer: the Akron Marathon went virtual, and the Children's Museum remains closed.

Executive Director Traci Buckner says there's a small silver lining in the fact that they had to close last March, half-way through a major capital campaign.



"What we intend to do is, do our project in phases. Since there's no people coming into the museum right now, we're going to start the build-out of some of our expansion."

Chris Anderson, director of the Rubber City Jazz & Blues Festival, says they also hope to be back in-person, even in a limited capacity.

[Click here to listen to the full story on wksu.org](#)

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Artwork Taking to the Akron Skies

Curated Storefront press release, Feb. 2021

In conjunction with Curated Storefront, Pennsylvanian artist Ian Brill has installed over 2,250 square feet of LED panels in the 19th floor of the former Akron City Center Hotel to create **Band**, a programmatic and immersive light installation.

Overlooking Cascade Plaza at 20 West Mill Street, the former Akron City Center Hotel has stood vacant for years. The top floors, with its 360 degree view of Downtown Akron, were left in what seems to have been a hurry with discarded wine glasses, books and Christmas decorations littering the floor. The once lively building has been left as a time capsule waiting to be reborn and now that Ian Brill has installed **Band**, Curated Storefront believes it will no longer be a building long forgotten in Akron.

[Click here to read the full story on downtownakron.com](#)



Akron Marathon to Return to In-Person Races this Year

by Dan Shingler, Crain's Cleveland Business, Apr. 2021

You've got a little more than five months to prepare for the return of the Akron Marathon, which has been scheduled for Sept. 25.

The Akron Marathon Charitable Corp. announced April 8 that it will hold in-person races for this year's Akron Marathon Race series. Races were virtual in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's marquee race, dubbed the FirstEnergy Akron Marathon for its lead sponsor, will start downtown before winding through a revised course that includes sections of previous courses and highlights various city neighborhoods and landmarks. A half marathon and team relay race will be held on Sept. 25 as well.

But this year's racing—or suffering, depending on your point of view and conditioning—begins alot sooner than that. The first races, the National Interstate 8K and one-mile events, will be held June 26. Then the action takes a break until Aug. 14, when the city will host the Goodyear Half Marathon and 10K, followed by the Kid's Fun Run presented by Akron Children's Hospital on Sept. 24.

Registration for the race series events has reached over 50% capacity, officials said. For more information, race registration and volunteer opportunities, visit [AkronMarathon.org](#).

[Click here to read the full story on crainscleveland.com](#)

Elevate Greater Akron

Launched in January 2021, Elevate Greater Akron 2.0 encompasses the original five strategies adjusted to meet the needs of the current economy.

One of those adjustments is to center collaborative work on the district through the Refocus on Downtown strategy. DAP is proud to work alongside the partners of the Elevate Greater Akron Steering Committee and participate in the Refocus, SPARK Akron and New BRE strategies to best serve our stakeholders.

[Learn more about the Elevate 2.0 plan here.](#)



VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bringing Visitors from All Walks of Life to Downtown

Zips 10 on the Town

DAP worked with University of Akron students, Jess and Michael along with DAP intern Payton Burkhammer, Pritt Entertainment Group (PEG) and downtown businesses to create a vlogger-style Zips 10 on the Town list of things not to be missed by new and not-so new Zips. Shared by DAP, UA and other partners, the video has been viewed over 3,500 times. [See the video here.](#)

For the Love of Zips

The University of Akron is assembling inspirational stories from campus to celebrate 150 years of education, leadership and inspiration. Share your story of a Zip who inspired you through a nomination at www.uakron.edu/150/inspire through May 7th.

Downtown Fun

DAP helped downtown celebrate Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day, Lent and 330 Shirt Day, by promoting downtown businesses offering programming, specials, and retail opportunities. Since the sights of the St. Patrick's Day parade had to be postponed for another year, St. Patrick's Day experiences were enhanced with giveaways at businesses, life-sized photo stations, pop up performances by bag pipers, and Lucky Scratch-Off cards distributed throughout the district.

Inaugural Sakura Celebration

DAP, in partnership with JANO (Japanese Association of Northeast Ohio), Akron Civic Commons, Knight Foundation, Alpha Phi Alpha Homes, and Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, celebrated the arrival of spring under the blossoms of the 470 cherry trees that line the canal along the Towpath Trail. The trees, planted in partnership with JANO and the city of Akron from 2011-2013, flower for less than seven days, but offer an unforgettable experience. This year, DAP and partners placed more than 1,600 luminaries along the trail and engaged more than 65,000 people on social media. Over 1,000 people came out to experience the blossoms, the downtown DORA, and a memorable evening in downtown.

Welcome Back, Akron Public Schools STEM Learners

DAP welcomed back in-person learners, faculty and staff at downtown Akron Public STEM Schools with 1000 Welcome Back greeting cards featuring We Are artwork and a free Chill ice cream. We are thrilled to have education as such an important part of the downtown neighborhood.

North High Parklet

Everyone's favorite outdoor spot, the North High Parklet, will get a seating facelift this spring. DAP will work with artist and fabricator Dominic Falcione to update the well-used, well-loved seating with a more weather resistant surface. The work should be complete by mid-May.



VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

New Businesses Open in Downtown



Welcome Ashton Blake, Blaak Media

Ashton Blake is a creative content designer and creator who recently opened his business, Blaak Media in downtown at 43 E. Market Street.

A participant in DAP's Start Downtown program funded by Burton D. Morgan Foundation, the young entrepreneur aims to lift other emerging artists through his work.

A musician, photographer, videographer, graphic designer and audio engineer, Ashton is an Akron Public Schools graduate whose self-taught skills led him to a BA from Kent State in Music Technology. Ashton was recently featured in a #ChooseGrowth330 video by The Greater Akron Chamber. [Watch the video here.](#)

Business Outreach

Q1 - 2021	CONTACTS MADE*	CONTACT GOAL
RETAIL OUTREACH	74	75
BUSINESS OUTREACH	24	25
RETAIL AND BUSINESS PROSPECTS**	24	25

* refers to the number of unique visits/contacts initiated by DAP per quarter



Welcome Luis Escudero and his new business, El Patrón

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, Luis Escudero's passion for good food and great vibes led him to open his new business, El Patrón Tequilería & Cuisine, in downtown Akron.

The young entrepreneur combines life and restaurateur lessons from his father and mentor with a degree in engineering from The University of Akron to navigate the day-to-day challenges of the business with an eye on the future.

With a grand opening this weekend, and great weather ahead, the neighborhood is looking forward to a happy Cinco De Mayo on the patio of El Patrón. [Find out more about El Patrón in this recent story by Jim Mackinnon for the Akron Beacon Journal.](#)

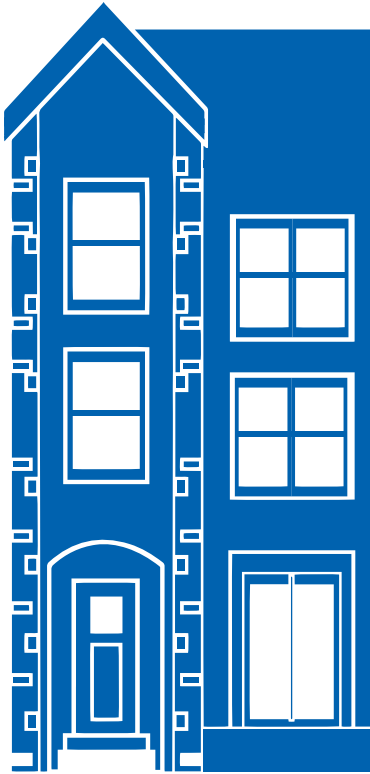
DAP connects with downtown businesses to ensure they have the information they need to thrive and grow. We also reach out to prospective businesses to strengthen and diversify the downtown business mix.

Business Outreach is an important component of DAP's mission allowing DAP to remain attuned to the needs of downtown businesses by supporting them with resources, site selection assistance, promotion and information and advocacy services in the district.

** Refers to the number of requests for DAP's assistance in locating space for business

VIBRANCY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Residential Development



The Downtown Akron Vision and Redevelopment Plan created in 2018 recommended the addition of 1,200 market rate residential units over the next ten years.

As of Q1 of 2021:

223 New units are complete

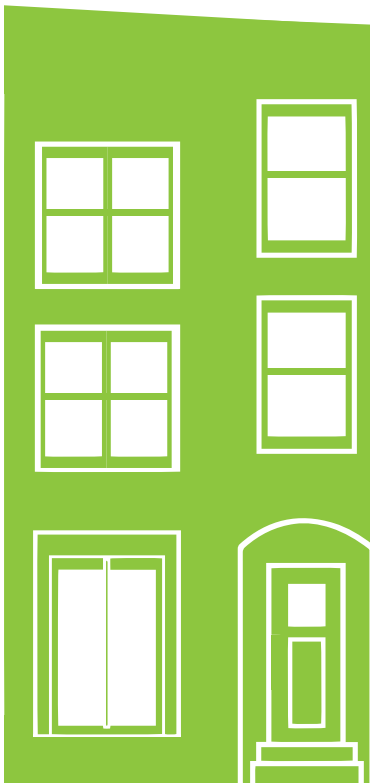
374 Units are in the pipeline

Occupancy is 90% and climbing.

A downtown open house is being planned for June 26 with DAP and residential property managers. Watch downtownakron.com for more details.



Office Occupancy*



	OCCUPANCY RATE	AVG ASKING RATE (PER SQ. FT.)
H1 - 2019	81.8%	\$15.83
H2 - 2019	81.6%	\$16.49
H1 - 2020	79.5%	\$16.46
H2 -2020	80.7%	\$16.24

*Data from CBRE



MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

DAP shares news about downtown progress, businesses, institutions and organizations, downtown life and the downtown community in numerous ways. The most readily measurable outlets for promotion and advocacy are digital, through the DAP website, social media and email newsletter. Below are selected metrics related to these communications.

SOCIAL MEDIA	Q1 - 2021
FACEBOOK	8,635
TWITTER	9,284
INSTAGRAM	5,454
LINKEDIN	1,417

WEBSITE TRAFFIC	Q1 - 2021
USERS	35,295
SESSIONS	41,401
PAGE VIEWS	79,607

EMAIL NEWSLETTER	Q1 - 2020	Q1 - 2021
NUMBER PUBLISHED	14	11
SENDS	65,812	64,726
OPENS	13,604	12,901
CLICKS	1,680	1,545
SUBSCRIBERS	15,565	16,601

Stay connected to the latest information on downtown Akron, subscribe to Do Downtown, our biweekly email newsletter at downtownakron.com/news/subscribe, and follow us on social media @DowntownAkronPartnership

CLEAN, SAFE & WELCOMING

DAP Ambassador Stats Jan. 1 - Mar. 31, 2021

4,405
TRASH COLLECTED (LBS)

11
MOTORIST/
VEHICLE
ASSISTANCE

144
SCOOTER
SUPPORT

312
BUSINESS CONTACTS MADE

296
BUS STOPS CLEANED

22
GRAFFITI
REMOVED

154
SKYWALK
PATROL

62
PARKING
ASSISTANCE

125
SNOW
REMOVAL
(hours)

26
SAFETY ESCORTS

495
HOSPITALITY
ASSISTANCE



A team of downtown ambassadors works to ensure a clean, safe and welcoming environment by providing safety escorts, cleaning of common touch points and other services to make downtown safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Ambassador hours of operation:
Monday - Friday: 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. | Saturday 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Sunday: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

For ambassador services or to report a problem, call the on-duty ambassador during hours of operation at 330-706-7383,

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

DOWNTOWN AKRON COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Looking for office or storefront commercial space? Downtown Akron Partnership can help you search for available locations within our 42-block Special Improvement District and arrange for tours. This is a free and confidential Site Selection service provided by our organization.

Downtown Akron is the heart of business and government in Summit County. Whether you are looking to locate a new business, relocate an existing business or open a satellite office, downtown Akron is the place to be. With a wide-range of retail and office space, downtown offers beautifully renovated historic buildings as well as newer, state-of-the-art space.

Visit downtownakron.com/do-business to view the ways in which DAP can help you relocate or start your business in downtown.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The DAP website also highlights available job opportunities within the Special Improvement District. Whether it's an office job or service position, full or part time, we want this page to become a go-to source for those interested in working downtown.

TO UPDATE YOUR COMPANY PROFILE, PROVIDE A PHOTO OR TO LIST A JOB OPENING, PLEASE EMAIL [INFO@DOWNTOWNAKRON.COM](mailto:info@downtownakron.com).

QUARTERLY DISTRICT MEETINGS

Updates include but are not limited to City of Akron construction projects, DAP updates, neighborhood updates and special events.

Meetings are digital.
RSVP at www.downtownakron.com/district

Canal District: May 13, Aug. 12, Nov. 11 2021
2 p.m.

Northside District: Jun. 10, Sept. 9, Dec. 9 2021
1 p.m.

Historic Arts District: Jul. 8, Oct. 14, 2021
10 a.m.

AKRON MUNICIPAL COURT RECEIVES STATE CERTIFICATION FOR JUDGE RON CABLE'S RISE INITIATIVE

In November 2020, Akron Municipal Court's Restore Individual Self-Empowerment (RISE), which was launched by Judge Ron Cable in October 2018, earned final certification from the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets.

RISE identifies and aids female victims of human trafficking, prostitution and sexual exploitation. Ohio law provides for expungement for victims of human trafficking. RISE is the first program in Summit County for adults facing this issue. [Read the entire article.](#)

TORCHBEARERS ANNOUNCES 2021 GRANT FROM KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Torchbearers, a volunteer-run organization that develops young change-makers to shape Greater Akron, is enacting a "pay what you're able" format to its membership model in 2021, thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

"Torchbearers brings together some of Akron's brightest future leaders and connects them with established community leaders and each other," said Kyle Kutuchief, program director for Knight Foundation's Akron program. "We are proud to partner with the organization to ensure that a member's ability to pay does not impact their opportunity to participate." [Read the entire article.](#)

SUMMIT ARTSPACE NAMES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Akron Beacon Journal, Jan. 2021

Heather Meeker has been named the new executive director of Summit Artspace in Akron. She previously served for 12



years as the executive director of the nonprofit Musical Theater Project in Cleveland.

"Summit Artspace is an Akron treasure that highlights our area's artists and serves as a community resource for entertainment and culture," Meeker said in a news release. "It is an important asset to downtown development and our arts district, and I

look forward to helping the organization reach even greater prominence." [Read the full story on ohio.com.](#)

SUMMA HEALTH IS NEW PRESENTING SPONSOR OF AKRON MARATHON RACE SERIES

Crain's Cleveland Business, Jan. 2021

The Akron Marathon Race Series has a new presenting sponsor: Summa Health. The Akron Marathon Charitable Corp., which organizes the series, made the announcement Tuesday, Jan. 12.

Summa will be the title sponsor through 2023, according to a news release. [Read the full story on crainscleveland.com](#)

BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS



THIRTEEN ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESSES SELECTED FOR MORTAR AT BOUNCE'S WINTER 2021 COHORT

Bounce Innovation Hub announced its list of small businesses that have been selected for the Winter 2021 MORTAR at Bounce cohort.

MORTAR at Bounce is an accelerator and business development program for existing and emerging entrepreneurs in a non-technology field, with a focus on minorities and women. The program is funded and presented in partnership with GAR Foundation, Burton D. Morgan Foundation, the City of Akron and Rubber City Match, and the Greater Akron Chamber.

Selected participants will enroll in a 15-week program to learn the fundamental elements of business ownership and build a comprehensive business canvas. [Read the entire article.](#)

WESTERN RESERVE COMMUNITY FUND OBTAINS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION CERTIFICATION

The Western Reserve Community Fund (WRCF), which is managed by the Development Finance Authority of Summit County (DFA), has received official certification as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) from the CDFI Fund, a program overseen by the U.S. Treasury. All CDFI's share a common goal of expanding economic opportunity in Low-Income Communities by providing access to financial products and services for local residents and businesses, striving to foster economic opportunity and revitalized neighborhoods.

CDFI certification has a critically important role in WRCF's long-term sustainability. Receiving this designation makes WRCF eligible for financial assistance awards available through the CDFI Fund such as the Rapid Response Program (RRP), and attracts additional investment from Community Reinvestment Act-interested partners. "More importantly," according to WRCF Executive Director Rachel Bridenstine, "certification allows us to build upon the great work we've already accomplished by enabling WRCF to have a greater regional community impact."

[Read the entire article.](#)

PRITT ENTERTAINMENT GROUP WINS BEST OF SHOW AT 2021 AMERICAN ADVERTISING AWARDS

Downtown Akron-based creative agency Pritt Entertainment Group (PEG) took home the Best of Show from the American Advertising Federation at the 2021 Akron American Advertising Awards, held virtually on Friday, February 19. In addition to the Best of Show, PEG took home 13 total awards, including a Judge's Choice and six Gold ADDYs. The 13 ADDYs are the most of any Akron-area agency for the second year in a row. [Read the entire article.](#)



BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENTS & NEWS

PERANTINIDES & NOLAN AWARDED BEST LAW FIRM TIER 1 RANKING

By U.S. News and World Report, Mar. 2021

Perantinides & Nolan Co., L.P.A is regionally ranked in 1 practice area: Tier 1 in Personal Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs. The U.S. News - Best Lawyers® "Best Law Firms" rankings are based on a rigorous evaluation process. [Read the entire report.](#)

BILL ALBRECHT LEAVES AKRON BEACON JOURNAL; EDITOR MICHAEL SHEARER IS NEW MARKET LEADER

Bill Albrecht, who had been with the Akron Beacon Journal in leadership roles since 2018, has left the company for a new professional opportunity.

Albrecht, who will be relocating outside of Ohio, was most recently regional vice president of sales for northern Ohio for Gannett and the USA TODAY Network. He initially served as Beacon Journal publisher following its 2018 sale to a company that merged with Gannett in 2019....

Michael Shearer, Beacon Journal editor and network regional editor for northern Ohio, continues in that role and assumes the additional role of market leader, serving as the Beacon Journal's face and go-to representative for the community.

Shearer joined the Akron team as editor in 2019 after serving as regional editor for Northeast Ohio and general manager/editor of the Record-Courier in Kent. He has more than 20 years of top editor experience across Ohio. [Read the full story on beaconjournal.com.](#)

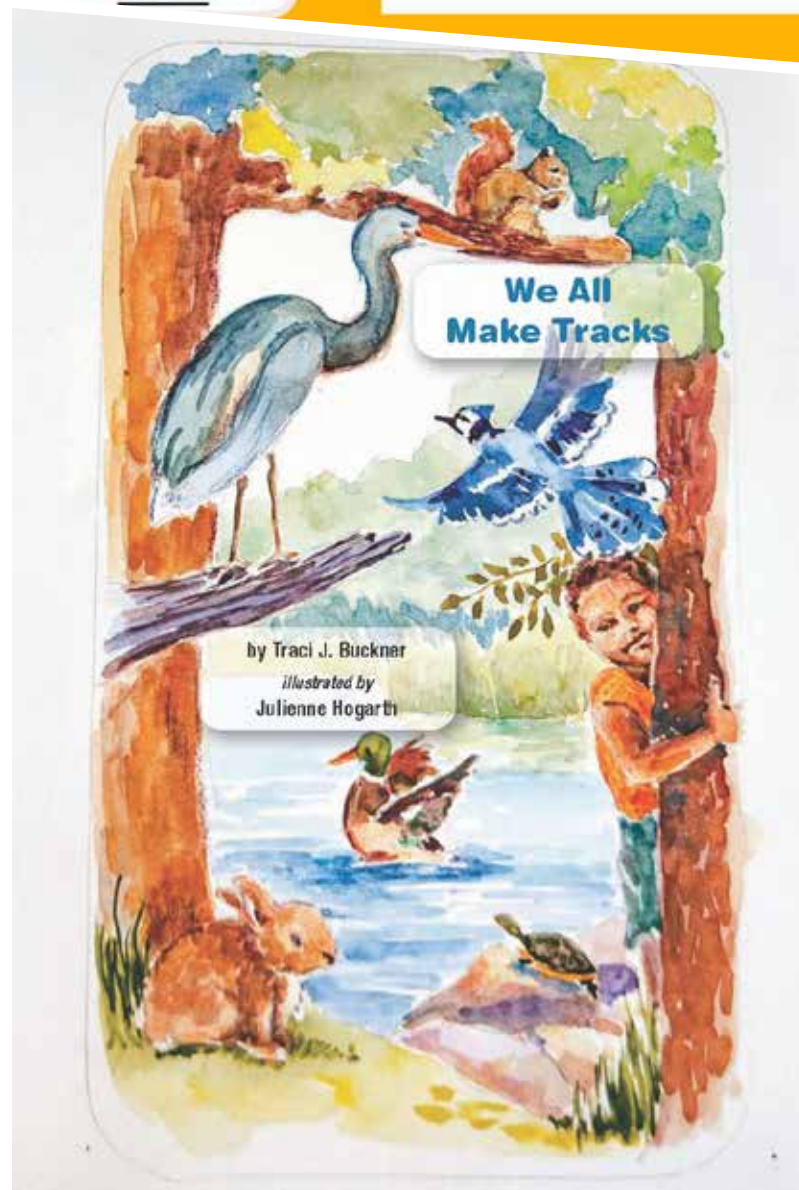
'WE ALL MAKE TRACKS' CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHORED BY TRACI J. BUCKNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AKRON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

By Barbara McIntyre, Akron Beacon Journal Mar. 2021

Everyone is important. We all leave our mark: literally, according to Traci J. Buckner, we all leave tracks.

Buckner, executive director of the Akron Children's Museum, wrote "We All Make Tracks" to compensate for attendance lost because of the pandemic and as a show-and-tell of the diversity of nature.

First explaining that human footprints are as varied as humans, Buckner follows with examples from the animal world... [Read the full story on beaconjournal.com](#)



TRANSPORTATION & DEVELOPMENT

FEATURED PROPERTY

106 N. Main Street

Conveniently located downtown office suites for lease with private and free onsite parking. Third Floor, 2 office suites available (160 SF and 210 SF) for an all inclusive rent of \$400-\$450/month each. Includes shared access to kitchen. For more information, contact Kimberly Beckett 330-374-7676 | kbeckett@downtownakron.com



FEATURED BUSINESS

TQL
50 S. Main Street, Suite 202

TQL serves businesses throughout North America by providing full truckload, less-than-truckload (LTL) and intermodal shipping services. Tough loads and lanes? Multiple fall-outs? Seasonal surges? TQL can help.

800-580-3101 | tql.com



METRO RTA SELECTS TEAM TO COORDINATE HOPE GRANT TRANSIT STUDY

The Akron Metro Regional Transit Authority selected a team of consultants to begin their transit-oriented design planning work. METRO's grant of \$450,000 from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) Program is intended to improve transit service in areas of persistent poverty. The well-qualified team is comprised of: MKSK, who has been involved with a variety of neighborhood and downtown planning projects in Akron in the past several years; WSP, who supported METRO with their recent 10-year strategic plan and brings a strong national expertise in transit; and HR&A, who are national leaders in real estate finance and economic development. METRO will be working in partnership with the City of Akron to lead this study which is expected to take 12 - 14 months. For questions about this process, please contact Emily Baarson, Senior Planner, METRO RTA at Emily.Baarson@akronmetro.org.



*A masked pedestrian crosses East Market Street after getting off the bus in Akron.
photo: Jeff Lange/Akron Beacon Journal*

AKRON METRO OFFERS FREE BUS RIDES FOR VACCINE APPOINTMENTS

Akron Metro RTA will offer free rides for people going to and from vaccine appointments.

The transport agency is partnering with the Ohio Department of Transportation's Rides for Community Immunity program to give free rides starting Monday.

"Transportation should never be a barrier when it comes to accessing medical appointments, and we want to ensure all persons have an opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine," said Metro CEO Dawn Distler. "This is a crucial step to help us move forward and conquer the pandemic."

Riders will need digital or printed proof of a same-day, scheduled COVID-19 vaccine appointment to receive a free fare, according to a news release from Akron Metro.

The free rides will be available on all of Metro's services, including fixed-route, demand response and Northcoast Express.

[Find out more on akronmetro.org](http://akronmetro.org)

PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION



Main Street Phase I Progress

The State Street Parking Deck entrance and exits will be restored to the original traffic pattern by the first week of April.

Irrigation is being finalized in the in-ground displays which are now fully landscaped. LED light, color changing bollards are also being installed in the landscape beds to help bring delight and animation to the street.

The first layer of granite is being laid on the base of the Alan Cotrill Rubber Worker statue. With the foundation in progress, we hope to see the statue complete during the early summer. For more information on the statue, visit akronstories.com.



Main Street Phase II Progress

Karvo is currently working on the installation of the proposed steam line in the block between Mill and Market Streets. Chilled water is complete to the Market St. intersection. FirstEnergy utility work will be completed in this area in the first week of May. Karvo anticipates starting on the roadway by the end of May. Main St. between Mill and Market Streets, as well as the south half of the Main/Market intersection will be completed by the end of July. Karvo will move to the north half of the Main/Market intersection in August with completion of this area scheduled for mid-September.

Main Street Parking Changes

The two-hour free parking offered during construction will end by May 3, 2021.

New meters and pay stations are being installed this month to complete this transition, and a new mobile app provider will be selected by the city of Akron to provide pay by mobile device service. Businesses in the Phase II section of the project will have validation stickers to share with patrons to those businesses.



PICTURE YOURSELF DOWNTOWN

JUNE 2021

EVENTS

ADVENTURES

DOWNTOWNAKRON.COM



Downtown Akron Partnership

Yoga, Kickboxing, Zumba, Line Dancing, Doggie Bootcamp & more
Downtown Akron History Self-Guided Walking Tours
Through June 18 | Wagonwheel Challenge Virtual 5k
ww5k.enmotive.com/akron-u

Akron RubberDucks | milb.com/akron

Home games June 1 - 6, 22 - 27, 29 - 30

Akron Art Museum | akronartmuseum.org

10,000 Things outdoor exhibition, starts May 31

Akron Civic Theatre | akroncivic.com

June 12 - 13 | Ballet Excel Ohio presents The Snow Queen
June 20 | Lights Out tribute to Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons

Akron Marathon | akronmarathon.org

June 26 | National Interstate 8k and 1 mile

Akron/Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau

Explore the Summit Brewpath | summitbrewpath.com

Akron-Summit County Public Library | akronlibrary.org

Programs for all ages, from story times to computer classes

Curated Storefront | curatedstorefront.org

Band by Ian Brill, 20 West Mill St., View after dark.

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad | cvsr.org

Departures from Akron Northside Station on Wed. and Sun.

Lock 3 | lock3live.com

(see page 5)

Summit Artspace | summitartspace.org

June 17 | Arts Alive
Through 26 | The Art of Y

For more events, food, shopping, arts and entertainment in downtown Akron, visit downtownakron.com
Share your experiences on social media #pictureyourselfdowntown





#Downtownakron

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