

City of Saginaw ARPA Committee

# Funding Recommendations to City Council

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## Intro

On December 20, 2021, the City of Saginaw passed Resolution 2021-036 that established a committee to recommend a funding strategy for \$25 million of the \$52 million that the City received from the Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (LFRF) from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The ARPA Committee first met on March 9, 2022, and worked continuously through August 10, 2022. The City of Saginaw ARPA Advisory Committee consisted of current and former non-profit leaders, Saginaw Valley State educators, healthcare administrators, religious leaders, and community health advocates, with the majority residing in the City of Saginaw.

The Committee first discussed the survey conducted by the City Council in 2021 and the Priority Groups that were generated from the following work session. They proceeded through a divergent thought exercise to break out what proposals within each Priority Group might look like. The committee engaged with the community through 38 community meetings over the course of 6 weeks and assisted the City in solicited 409 unique proposals and ideas. The submitted proposals and ideas were then sorted into themes so that individual proposals could illustrate a larger narrative from the community. That narrative was then layered in with the original survey, Council Priority Groups, and each committee member’s unique perspective and experience with the City of Saginaw.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee then completed their process by finding points of consensus amongst each other. The recommendations below are the completion of that consensus process. Due to limited funds, the Committee could not recommend funding every request, so the recommendations below are for priorities the Committee deemed most impactful to the community while also staying within the framework of the LFRF allowable uses. The Committee avoided specific proposals where possible to focus on the need over the solution. Though, any proposals that were elevated in discussion are listed in the appendix as proposals that should be considered – though not necessarily to the exclusion of others. These recommendations are also ordered by priority (pending Committee survey), with the first recommendation being the highest Committee priority. It is important to note that the Committee considered the information presented in the proposals and ideas. The Committee’s recommendations are meant to speak to the needs to of the community first and foremost. We recognize that City Council and Administration have more information that may adjust how the funds end up getting spent.

Priority	Recommendation	Amount
2.63	Community Centers, Childcare, and Youth Development	\$10,000,000
5.5	Grocery Store Capital Investment	\$2,000,000
3.25	Housing Revitalization	\$4,000,000
5.88	Foster, Transition, and Elder Care	\$2,000,000
4.5	Saginaw Behavioral Health Clinic	\$5,000,000
5.5	Parks	\$1,500,000
5.13	Arts & Culture	\$1,000,000
6.13	Neighborhood Associations	\$1,600,000
6.5	Fairgrounds	\$1,275,000

<sup>1</sup> All Priority Groups and key themes can be found in the City Council Report from 2021: [https://www.saginaw-mi.com/government/city\\_council/saginaw\\_strategic\\_planning\\_-\\_2021.php](https://www.saginaw-mi.com/government/city_council/saginaw_strategic_planning_-_2021.php)

## Community Centers, Childcare, and Youth Development and Recreation

Note: This is a single recommendation that combines many community needs. This is done with the goal of deep collaboration in mind. The detailed work of piecing that collaboration together will rely on City Council and City Administrative staff.

### Impact Statement

#### Community Centers

Community centers serve as a local hub for a variety of educational, health, and civic needs. Investing in community centers – specifically in historically underserved communities – creates opportunities for significant and diverse programming that will serve each local communities’ unique needs. The Committee believes that currently, community centers lack the resources to provide adequate programming and one-on-one attention that children need, but with these funds, they agree that the community centers in Saginaw could adjust their current operations and implement a more impactful program for residents with an evidence-based curriculum. Community centers that serve disproportionately impacted individuals are eligible under the Final Rule.

The Final Rule<sup>2</sup> states that funds can be used for programs, services, or capital expenditures that respond to the public health and negative economic impacts of the pandemic. More specifically, the Final Rule permits funding for capital expenditures that support community needs apart from health care, such as new construction or improvements to community centers. Because these community centers are nonprofits that address disparities in education and provide educational services like tutoring or afterschool programs, summer education and enrichment

programs, and supports for students’ social, emotional, and mental health, they are eligible for funding. The City of Saginaw can identify these community centers as a “*class of nonprofits that have been disproportionately impacted by the public health emergency.*”<sup>i</sup>

Investment in community centers aligns with multiple Priority Groups, depending on programming: Health, Economic Development, Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification, and Youth and Family.

It aligns with many overarching themes. Supporting community centers within Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs)<sup>3</sup> would ensure that the theme of Equity and Diversity Analysis is supported. Community Centers are the best way to ensure increased collaboration between non-profits and public service organizations within the City of Saginaw – another key theme. The Committee agreed that community centers can holistically and indirectly lower local crime, serving the final theme of Crime Prevention.

#### Childcare

Childcare providers closed down during the pandemic and have yet to rebound to pre-pandemic levels, forcing parents to choose between taking care of their children and remaining in the labor force.<sup>ii</sup> Moreover, childcare centers serving low-income families were even less likely to continue providing services through the pandemic.<sup>iii</sup> The lack of available childcare combined with the lack of paid family leave means parents in low-income households are more likely to experience a reduction of income or leave their jobs due to a lack of childcare options.<sup>iv</sup>

Providing funds to address childcare aligns with the initial priority groups Youth and Family as well as Economic Development. Furthermore, because of the Committee’s recommendation to combine Childcare

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<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) adopted a final rule implementing the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). The final rule, which all recipients must comply to, responds to comments received on the interim final rule. Recipients should also review the final rule for additional information.

<sup>3</sup> They are a common method for identifying communities with a large proportion of low-income residents. Qualified

Census Tracts (QCTs) are areas where 50% or more of the households have incomes below 60% of the area median income, or where the poverty rate is 25% or higher. Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code defines them and further restricts the total population of designated QCTs to 20% of area population. From [https://files.nc.gov/ncgov/documents/files/ncpro/QCT-overview\\_final.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/ncgov/documents/files/ncpro/QCT-overview_final.pdf).

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and Community Center investments, collaborative opportunities are created as parents will be able to access childcare and community center programming in one facility.

The Final Rule states that under healthy childhood environments, childcare and early learning services are *“enumerated eligible uses that are generally responsive to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic in all communities, not just in disproportionately impacted communities.”*<sup>v</sup> Therefore, the Final Rule permits allocating funds towards *“new or expanded services, increasing access to services, efforts to bolster, support, or preserve existing providers and services, and similar activities.”*<sup>vi</sup> The projects that the Committee is recommending relating to childcare are in line with the guidelines from the Final Rule.

### Youth Development and Recreation

Investing in programs tailored to children and youth advances socioeconomic return on investment with beneficiaries including the children, parents, governments, taxpayers, and society as a whole.<sup>vii</sup> For example, the National Forum on Early Childhood Policy and Programs has found that high quality early childhood programs can yield a \$4 to \$9 return per dollar invested, through “reduced crime, welfare, and educational remediation, as well as increased tax revenues on higher incomes for the participants of early childhood programs when they reach adulthood.”<sup>viii</sup>

Youth programming and care can help children avoid problems that create high societal costs like grade repetition, early parenthood, and incarceration.<sup>ix</sup> In tandem with youth development programs, recreation has been proven to increase socialization with peers, communication skills, autonomy, and leisure skills, as well as foster appropriate behavior development, enhance self-esteem and self-confidence, and ignite a feeling of community and acceptance for all.<sup>x</sup>

Unfortunately, Covid-19 slowed the educational, social and physical opportunities for youth across the Country. In many historically underserved communities, this only exacerbated the unequal opportunities that were already evident. By investing in programming that supports this development and recreation, specifically

in disproportionately impacted communities, it takes a step in addressing historical inequities. To be most impactful, investing in youth must begin during early childhood and adolescence when life-long patterns of behavior are established.<sup>xi</sup> Youth Development and Recreation investment directly aligns with the priority theme of Diversity and Equity Analysis by catering programs to communities that have had little programming before along with indirectly aligning with Crime Prevention because of lowered incarceration rates. The Committee encourages City Council to invest in projects that have a conflict resolution aspect because youth development programs need to teach conflict resolution skills in order to more effectively contribute to crime prevention.

By deliberately funding programming within Community Centers, Collaboration will also be elevated, so these programs should run adjacently with existing programming and the Childcare recommendation.

In the Final Rule, it is evident that the Treasury recognizes the impact the pandemic had on children and their development. As such, the Final Rule states that funding is eligible for *“services like tutoring or afterschool programs, summer education and enrichment programs, and supports for students’ social, emotional, and mental health needs”* in order to address disparities in education.<sup>xii</sup> The Final Rule adds that *“any K-12 student who lost access to in-person instruction for a significant period of time has been impacted by the pandemic and is thus eligible for responsive services,”* which would include those that a youth development and recreation program would provide.<sup>xiii</sup>

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds on community centers with a focus on childcare and youth development and recreation programming.**

**Target Spend: \$10,000,000**

The Committee sees community centers as a great hub for collaboration. This will not only increase the efficiency of the programs but will also increase the impact on those local communities.

## Notes and Considerations

Individual community centers, childcare, and youth development and recreation proposals ranged from \$100,000 to \$5,500,000. After assessing and discussing that community centers can house programs for childcare and youth development and recreation, the Committee saw the opportunity for collaboration and decided to fund all three categories for \$10,000,000. The Committee recommends focusing on capital requests for community centers which will allow room in each of their respective budgets to fund operational costs for salaries and programming since funding only capital mitigates potential sustainability risks. Funding salaries and programming, for example, comes with added risk because it would require additional requirements that could reduce the time available to spend the funds, such as subrecipient compliance and monitoring to ensure the funds are being used properly. Additionally, the Committee discussed avoiding potential funding cliffs after 2026, where organizations would not be able to sustain programming without the availability of ARPA funds.

Another potential opportunity for collaboration around Youth Development and Recreation is with the Saginaw Public School District.

## Grocery Store Capital Investment

### Impact Evaluation

Most of the City of Saginaw is considered a food desert, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>xiv</sup> The agency defines 'food deserts' as low-income urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. In 2015, data concluded that as much as 25% of the Saginaw community had difficulty accessing a grocery store.<sup>xv</sup> Moreover, the same data found that on average, adult consumption of fruits and vegetables was below 11% of an individual's daily food intake in Saginaw. In the Final Rule, the Treasury states that food insecurity rates, which are higher among lower-income households and households of color, doubled among all households from February 2020 to May 2020. It even estimated there are "nearly 20 million adults living in households

where there is sometimes or often not enough food to eat."<sup>xvi</sup>

Funding the grocery store will address many priority groups from the initial City Council Priority 2021 Survey Session because of the potential additional effects. Firstly, a top priority group, Health, will be directly addressed as residents will be able to easily access healthy food. Pending program design, this project could also support four other priority groups. For example, if a new grocery store is created in Saginaw, it could house a food distribution program for the underserved which would foster Collaboration and Economic Development. Equity is taken into account by ensuring the grocery store is located within a QCT and centrally within a food desert, so that underserved populations will have easy access to food.

The Interim Final Rule included an enumerated eligible use for food assistance, and the Treasury is maintaining that without change for the Final Rule. Therefore, recipients may "*administer programs through a wide range of entities, including nonprofit and for-profit entities, to carry out eligible uses on behalf of the recipient government...Further, Treasury is clarifying that capital expenditures related to food banks and other facilities primarily dedicated to addressing food insecurity are eligible.*"<sup>xvii</sup>

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds on funding a grocery store's capital costs.**

**Target Spend: \$2,000,000**

The Committee identified the need for food accessibility, especially healthy food accessibility in the City of Saginaw, determining it a critical issue that garnered almost unanimous support. There are many ways to ameliorate food security that may be more cost effective. The Committee identified investment in a grocery store due to the ripple effects aligned with the priority groups Economic Development and Neighborhood Beautification. In recommending the funding of a grocery store, the Committee acknowledges that the impact will go beyond just providing access to food in the community; evidence has shown that eating healthy, consistent meals

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improves stability related to housing, healthcare, and childcare as well as economic prosperity.

The Committee narrowed down its recommendation for funding to only capital costs, to mitigate risks that come with funding for programming and operations. In order to address two priorities (health and neighborhood beautification) with one source of funding, the Committee recommends that the City purchase a blighted building, renovate it to house a grocery store, and recruit either a non-profit, co-op, or chain grocery store to move their operations into the facility, with a preference for a non-profit, co-op, or already existing locally owned grocer in Saginaw.

### Notes and Consideration

Based on a proposal, the total cost for a grocery store can range from \$4,000,000 to \$4,500,000. After analyzing and considering the proposals and the overall need for a grocery store, the ARPA Advisory Committee has agreed to recommend \$2,000,000 for grocery store capital costs. The City should prioritize partnering with local, existing grocery stores who have already built a relationship with residents of Saginaw instead of recruiting a completely new store to the area.

One additional area that merits consideration is that even when grocery stores open in food deserts, oftentimes we don't see people flock in droves to the new location because they prefer their old grocery stores more, and even if they do go, they may continue to buy the unhealthy food that was previously available to them even with the presence of more fresh food.<sup>xviii</sup> To combat this, the grocery store could look to provide community cooking classes or recipe cards in store to help teach community members about what is in their new grocery store and how they can use it. This would be eligible under 2.22 Strong Healthy Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety.

## Housing Revitalization

### Impact Evaluation

As of 2020, over 93% of the homes in Saginaw were built over 50 years ago. That is staggering in comparison

to fact that in the surrounding areas of the County, only 16% fall into that category. These old structures are prone to complications with their structure, foundation, maintenance, upkeep, and heating/cooling to name a few. Another key issue within Saginaw is the lack of middle housing. Middle housing includes homes like townhouses or small multi-family buildings. In the future, Saginaw will experience a boom in demand for these types of homes and a huge lack of supply.<sup>xix</sup>

There is significant evidence that housing rehabilitation grant programs enable housing improvements that have a measurable influence on health, particularly when renovations focus on enhancing warmth via insulation and energy efficiency techniques.<sup>xx xxi xxii</sup> Warmer housing has consistently shown positive effects on respiratory outcomes, general physical and mental health, and well-being indicators such as self-rated general health.<sup>xxiii xxiv</sup>

Improvements to housing have also been demonstrated to minimize child absences from school, adult absences from work, medical visits, and hospitalizations.<sup>xxv xxvi</sup> Low-income home rehabilitation projects that address "building deficiencies" may help enhance health outcomes and reduce disparities associated with asthma, sinusitis, and chronic bronchitis. Building deficiencies such as insufficient heating and ventilation, lead paint, insect infestation, and safety concerns are linked to bad health outcomes like major injuries, chronic respiratory ailments, poor mental health, and the spread of infectious diseases.<sup>xxvii xxviii</sup>

Housing rehabilitation efforts in low-income neighborhoods and communities void of historical investment may have a positive impact on the quality and stability of the community.<sup>xxix xxx</sup> One study conducted in Milwaukee found that housing rehabilitation may lead to appreciation for the rebuilt homes as well as local consequences such as increased surrounding property prices and neighborhood stability. Although appreciation is more prevalent in poorer regions, it does not seem to be linked to displacement.<sup>xxxi</sup>

The Committee identified lack of safe housing and blight as critical City issues. These are issues that align directly

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with the initial City priority groups. Based on the City's 2021 facilitation session and survey, Housing is one of the main priorities for City Council and major concerns for the community. In fact, Housing (neighborhood revitalization) was the second-most important category to the respondents', receiving 22 percent of the votes. Housing relates directly to all 5 of the priority groups and would serve a critical need in the community. In choosing to focus this recommendation solely on housing rehabilitation as opposed to increasing affordable housing or building new homes all together, the Committee acknowledges the potential to address the housing and blight problems in Saginaw simultaneously.

The interim final rule included programs or services that address home repairs, housing insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness. The final rule states that enumerated uses include *"supportive housing or other programs or services to improve access to stable, affordable housing among individuals who are homeless and development of affordable housing to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units."*<sup>xxxii</sup>

This program would be broadly eligible under ARPA guidelines to a majority of the Saginaw community, though similar programs identify a tiered income approach to better tailor the program to those with the highest need.

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds on the revitalization of existing housing.**

### Target Spend: \$4,000,000

The Committee narrowed down the recommendation on housing funding to focus on existing, owner-occupied, housing due to its ability to stop the degradation of existing housing stock. This will also stop the spread of blight throughout the community – a top priority from the Committee. This would also create generational wealth as maintained homes can be passed down.

A housing repair program can be easily tailored to serve disproportionately impacted people. Any housing repair would need to be tailored to resident income through the implementation of a tier system. This would ensure that this program is not limited by geography but instead serves any within the City that are in need of this support.

### Notes and Considerations

There were numerous requests for individual housing repair along with proposals for housing repair by established organizations. The City also has existing housing repair programs that can be leveraged to distribute these funds. By identifying a non-City subrecipient, potentially one with a precedence of doing housing repairs in Saginaw, the funds can be distributed to that organization and be delivered to residents after 2024, with distribution ending by Dec 31, 2026. A City run program would need to complete distribution by the end of 2024. This would be eligible and reported under 2.23 Strong Healthy Communities: Demolition and Rehabilitation of Properties

Housing revitalization proposals ranged from \$250,000 to \$3,850,000. After analyzing and considering the many proposals submitted under housing revitalization, the ARPA Advisory Committee has agreed to recommend \$4,000,000 for housing revitalization.

## Foster, Transition, and Elder Care

### Impact Evaluation

Children in foster care were disproportionately affected by the pandemic as it created new barriers for them and exacerbated existing challenges. As a result, these children are at an even greater risk of falling behind in their studies.<sup>xxxiii</sup> In particular, these children suffered from a lack of routine and increased loneliness which heightened stress and sadness.<sup>xxxiv</sup> In the State of Michigan there are approximately 10,000 children in foster care.<sup>xxxv</sup>

It is evident that elderly individuals were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as those above the age of 65 make up 16% of the U.S. population, but 75% of the deaths from COVID-19.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

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As such, they too have faced unequal burdens brought forth with this pandemic. In the city of Saginaw, there are approximately 5,964 people over the age of 65.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

These issues align with the initial City priority groups. Based on the City's 2021 facilitation session and survey, Health is one of the main priority groups for City Council. Additionally, Social Programs and Nonprofit Agencies received eight percent of the responses in the community. The Committee assessed the proposals submitted from the community and agreed that funding foster, transition, and elder care is important and a great way to generate Collaboration between organizations that support these disadvantaged communities, which is an overarching theme and goal of the City.

The Interim Final Rule included programs and services that promote healthy childhood environments, such as programs to provide home visits by health professionals and social service professionals and services for child-welfare-involved families and foster youth to provide support and education on child development, positive parenting, coping skills, or recovery for mental health substance use.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds on specific disadvantaged communities: foster care, foster transition care, and elder care.**

### Target Spend: \$2,000,000

The Committee identified the foster, foster transition care (youth that are aging out of the foster care center and need assistance with housing beyond foster care), and elder care populations as disadvantaged and critical City issues.

### Notes and Considerations

Foster, transition, and elder care proposals ranged from \$50,000 to \$3,000,000. After analyzing and considering the many proposals submitted under this category, the Committee has agreed to recommend \$2,000,000 for foster, transition, and elder care, with specific elevated proposals. The City does not traditionally fund these programs. They are normally funded through Federal

CDBG funds, so we could use these funds to supplement that existing program.

## Saginaw Behavioral Health Clinic

### Impact Evaluation

Before the pandemic, Saginaw reported higher rates of depression and poorer mental health compared to the state of Michigan according to a 2017-2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey.<sup>xxxix</sup>

COVID-19 has exacerbated the impacts of mental health issues among all age groups as isolation, illness, injury, and overall lifestyle changes have led to rising instances of mental illnesses.<sup>xl</sup> There are strong links to mental health funding and better physical health, family unit cohesion, social cohesion, and crime prevention.<sup>xli</sup>

These are all priorities for the City to address with ARPA funds. ARPA funding to address mental health will also lead to long term benefits. Studies show that there is a 5 to 1 return on investments in mental health—for every dollar the City spends, they can expect to see 5 dollars of net return in future economic and societal health benefits making this an important issue to address and fund.<sup>xlii</sup>

Survey priorities of Economic Development, City Beautification, and Health are addressed. Furthermore, there is much priority group alignment because this project has connections to Health, Economic Development, Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification, and Youth and Family. Lastly, Collaboration, Equity, and Crime Prevention are goals of this project. Collaboration with CMU and other local organizations is built into the framework of the project. Equity is achieved as those at or below the poverty line are almost twice as likely to experience mental illness like depression, and this project aims to remedy that.<sup>xliii</sup> Lastly, additional mental health resources are related to overall lower rates of crime as many incarcerated individuals suffer from mental illness.<sup>xliiv</sup>

The Final Rule recognizes the importance of addressing the mental health crisis in this Country due to the pandemic. It states, *"In January 2021, over 40 percent of American adults reported symptoms of depression or anxiety, up from 11 percent in the first half of 2019."*<sup>xliv</sup>

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As such, Treasury carved out an expenditure category, 1.12 Mental Health Services, to encompass these types of programs. Furthermore, the Final Rule says that these ARPA funds can cover *“an expansive array of services for prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction for mental health, substance use, and other behavioral health challenges caused or exacerbated by the public health emergency.”*<sup>xlvi</sup> The services provided with the Behavioral Health Clinic are in line with these recommendations. Lastly, Treasury explicitly states that there need not be any show of disproportionate impacts to any specific groups and while already disenfranchised groups were more deeply affected by mental health challenges during the pandemic, *“recipients can identify the impacted population as the general public.”*<sup>xlvii</sup> As such, this Behavioral Center will have the large latitude to help any and all patients without having to prove any disproportionate impact due to COVID-19.

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds to contribute to the cost of the new City of Saginaw Behavioral Health Clinic.**

#### **Target Spend: \$5,000,000**

The Committee agreed that funding the Behavioral Health Clinic is important as it addresses economic investment as well as investments in mental health for the community. Through collaboration with the State, the County, and CMU, the project would create jobs and opportunities that will benefit all residents in the City.

The Committee began the process of discussing this by preliminarily agreeing that funding mental health was not a priority, as mental health is indirectly supported through the other recommendations made in this document. After another review of this project, the Committee understood that this investment goes farther than just mental health. It will be an economic development opportunity, attract numerous businesses, a site for future growth attracting some of the brightest medical minds in the state, and a large infrastructure project that would provide jobs and opportunities to many residents.

The Committee makes this recommendation while making a few assumptions about the content of this proposal, specifically. First, the Committee understands the language of the proposal to say that this clinic will provide free or low-cost mental health services to City residents while focusing on high-need communities including but not limited to Qualified Census Tracts. Second, the Committee assumes that this project will be sustainable beyond 2024 and 2026 when ARPA funding can no longer be appropriated and spent respectively, seeing as the funding request is solely for capital costs. Third, these new services will compliment and collaborate with pre-existing resources, centers, clinics, etc. in the community including but not limited to HealthSource Saginaw. The recommendation is pending these assumptions.

### Notes and Considerations

The total cost for this project is \$15,000,000, but the ARPA ask from the City is \$5,000,000.

### Parks

#### Impact Evaluation

In the early 2000s, the City of Saginaw, due to budget constraints, decided to cut most of its funding for maintaining and managing parks and associated programs. Ever since, many of these parks have become dilapidated and blight-ridden. Some of the biggest parks with the most proposals submitted were Ojibway, Wickes, Bliss, and Hoyt parks. This recommendation addresses the initial survey which prioritized parks and trails, and city beautification - which investing in existing parks accomplishes. It also aligns with 4 of the priority groups: Health, Economic Development, Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification, and Youth and Family. Additionally, evidence shows how parks provide economic/property value, health and environmental benefits, and a wide breadth of social importance.<sup>xlviii</sup> Providing community spaces for people of all ages to congregate in a safe and healthy manner ought to be an important use of ARPA funds.

The Final Rule states how investments in neighborhood features, such as parks, can work to improve physical and mental health outcomes.<sup>xlix</sup> Allowing people access

to nature and parks, has been connected to decreased levels of mortality and illness and increased well-being.<sup>i</sup> Additionally, Treasury states how encouraging physical activity can also play a role in health outcomes, mitigating the risk for chronic diseases and more severe COVID-19 outcomes.<sup>ii</sup> As such, they established an expenditure category, 2.22 Strong Healthy Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety, to allow governments to use ARPA funds for parks and greenspaces. However, these must be targeted toward disproportionately affected communities.

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds on existing parks because the city does not have the capacity to maintain new parks. The Committee specifically identified existing city parks Ojibway Island, Wickes Park, Bliss Park, and Hoyt Park for funding.**

#### **Target Spend: \$1,500,000**

These recommendations were made due to the number of proposals received for each park and the location within QCTs – making them eligible for funding.

### Notes and Considerations

Park proposals ranged from \$193,000 to \$1,250,000. Morley Park was one park which was heavily discussed by the Committee and while we understand it is not a City Park, we think funding it would be important for the community and would represent a tremendous collaboration opportunity for the City to pursue because they would need to work with the school that already owns the space. We recommend considering Morley Park as well.

After analyzing and considering the many parks and greenspaces proposals, the ARPA Advisory Committee has agreed to recommend \$1,500,000 for existing parks at Ojibway Island, Wickes Park, Bliss Park, and Hoyt Park as well as collaborative efforts for Morley School Park, each receiving an average of \$300,000. The committee reached this consensus because they believed this amount of money would allow the parks to be revitalized and restored while also allowing a sufficient

amount of money to be left over for other projects, as identified by City Council.

## Arts & Culture

### Impact Evaluation

In 2016, Ipsos Public Affairs took a national public opinion survey in which nearly three quarters of Americans said the arts provide meaning to their lives.<sup>iii</sup> The arts cultivate young imaginations and facilitate success in school, enhancing academic achievement in multiple subject areas. They provide the critical thinking, communications, and innovation skills essential to a productive 21st century work force.<sup>iiii</sup> In the same survey, they found that 67 percent of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 62 percent agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better.”<sup>liv</sup>

Investing in arts and culture aligns with the initial City priority groups, elevating Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification, Youth and Family, and Economic Development. The initial City Survey also prioritized city beautification and economic development opportunities, both of which are encapsulated by this potential investment.

While the Final Rule does not explicitly mention arts and culture, it does maintain the position in the interim final rule that allows “recipients to provide direct assistance to nonprofits that experienced public health or negative economic impacts of the pandemic.”<sup>lv</sup> The ARPA Advisory Committee agreed that non-profits can best manage the arts and culture investment in the community.

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds on arts and culture investments.**

#### **Target Spend: \$1,000,000**

Furthering the arts and culture in Saginaw is a community need articulated by numerous committee members. These projects can attract all types of people

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and businesses to the City and create long-term economic prosperity.

### Notes and Considerations

The Committee specifically elevated a proposal that would create a subgrant program to fund arts and culture projects throughout the City through 2026. The Committee also agrees with the proposed \$1,000,000 amount.

## Neighborhood Associations

### Impact Evaluation

By funding the 16 Neighborhood Associations, the City can ensure each neighborhood will have a local say in how funds are spent to repair, support and beautify their local area. This would also go a long way in building back the grassroots roll the Neighborhood Associations play in local governance. Neighborhood associations could spend money on a park, sidewalk replacement, tree planting, signage upkeep, or many other possibilities – ensuring that neighborhoods will be able to address their own unique priorities.

Based on the City’s 2021 Facilitation Session and Survey, Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification and Youth and Family are main priorities that would be directly addressed with these funds. Additionally, City Beautification received 7 percent of the responses in the community, showing that the community values investments in projects that will address these problems.

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds on the Neighborhood Associations to uplift Saginaw’s communities.**

### Target Spend: \$1,600,000

The Committee identified the need for stronger investments into all of Saginaw’s neighborhoods because each area has the potential to improve the quality of life for the residents.

Because the 409 proposals come from different areas of Saginaw and it would be impossible to fund everything with the funds given, the Committee determined that

funding all Neighborhood Associations would be a direct way of catering to every individuals’ needs in the community and ensuring that no corner of the City was overlooked as these funds are distributed.

### Notes and Considerations

The ARPA Advisory Committee has agreed to recommend one specific proposal asking for \$1,600,000 to be distributed evenly to all neighborhood associations. Instead of giving each Neighborhood Association the same amount of money, City Council could base grants on need or population size in order to make this project more equal by giving all the residents a level playing field. For example, neighborhoods with larger populations have more people to serve than those with smaller populations; thus, they might require more funding. On the other hand, equity could be the goal and neighborhoods in need of less resources could forfeit their benefits to neighborhoods that lack basic needs and services. By giving more to neighborhood associations that fall within QCTs, have lower median incomes, or experience higher rates of crime, for example, City Council would better address equity in giving more to neighborhoods with more need.

## Fairgrounds

### Impact Evaluation

The Fairgrounds in Saginaw is a historic spot in Southeast Saginaw which formerly held the County Fair and horse races and was recently added to the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>lvi</sup> Even though this spot is blight-ridden, it is an area of pride for the Fairground Neighborhood due to its historic importance. Additionally, the revitalization of fairgrounds was one of the focus areas under the Neighborhood Preservation and Beautification Priority Group at the City Council facilitation session in 2021.<sup>lvii</sup> This project also meets the overarching themes of collaboration and crime prevention while falling into the priority groups of neighborhood preservation and beautification, health, and youth and family.

The Final Rule states that investments in neighborhood features, such as parks, can work to improve physical and mental health outcomes.<sup>lviii</sup> Allowing people access

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to nature and parks, has been connected to decreased levels of mortality and illness and increased well-being.<sup>ix</sup> Additionally, Treasury states how encouraging physical activity can also play a role in health outcomes, mitigating the risk for chronic diseases and more severe COVID-19 outcomes.<sup>ix</sup> As such, they established an expenditure category, 2.22 Strong Healthy Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety, to allow governments to use ARPA funds for parks and greenspaces. However, these must be targeted toward disproportionately affected communities. The Saginaw Fairgrounds Development Project falls within a QCT making it eligible as a disproportionately impacted community under the Final Rule.

### Recommendation

**The Committee recommends that the City spend ARPA funds to cover phase 1 of the Saginaw Fairgrounds Development Project.**

**Target Spend: \$1,275,000**

The Committee identified blight and park revitalization as critical City issues. Additionally, the Committee

recognized the sheer volume of proposals dedicated to the Fairgrounds and thus determined it an important issue to address with these funds. The City should look back to the community when devising a funding strategy.

The Committee decided to separate the Fairgrounds Development Project from the parks because it is technically not an existing park. They then decided to only fund Phase 1 of the Fairgrounds proposal to repair and revitalize the existing fairgrounds and gate.

### Notes and Considerations

The Committee chose to recommend \$1,275,000 for the Fairgrounds. This number was based off of a demolition estimate in a submitted proposal.

There are a plethora of community groups involved with the Fairgrounds, and as such, the Committee recommends that the City work with these groups and prioritize collaboration with them when revitalizing the Fairgrounds.

## Appendix

NOTE: Proposals linked [here](#). Appendix linked [here](#).

<b>Community Centers</b>		
First Ward Community Service	Project 326	Page 340
Community Center, Soup Kitchen & After School Wrap Around Programs	Project 224	Page 309
All Around the Neighborhood	Project 121	Page 303
CAC Family Resource Center	Project 267	Page 62
Saginaw Community Center	Project 188	Page 144
<b>Grocery Store</b>		
Community Food Club	Project 100	Page 294
Food Distribution Across the City of Saginaw	Project 137	Page 278
<b>Housing Revitalization</b>		
MiHome Rehab Program	Project 68	Page 357
Historic District Improvements	Project 343	Page 371
Affordable Housing Development and Repairs	Project 189	Page 381
Healthy Affordable Homes Project (HAHP)	Project 140	Page 379
<b>Childcare</b>		
YMCA Strengthens Community	Project 238	Page 312
Neighborhood House	Project 194	Page 153
<b>Youth Development</b>		
YMCA Strengthens Community	Project 238	Page 312
Boys & Girls Club Help our Youth	Project 53	Page 137
Saginaw's Boys & Girls Club TEEN CENTER	Project 287	Page 147
Strengthening the Helpers While Empowering the Community	Project 336	Page 209
Chin-Up (Changing Headlines in Neighborhoods with Upward bound People)	Project 386	Page 212
CWhatWorks Stem	Project 328 (330)	Page 171
Civitan Recreation Center - Revitalization	Project 181	Page 142
Saginaw YEARN Job Development and Training Program	Project 364	Page 178
Daniel's Den Ministries Roaring Lions Learning Center Summer/After School Program	Project 178	Page 256
Expanding one-to-one mentoring	Project 236	Page 200

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<b>Foster, Transition, and Elder Care</b>		
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Saginaw’s Youth Foster Strength	Project 195	Page 167
<b>Saginaw Behavioral Health Clinic</b>		
City of Saginaw Behavioral Health Clinic	Project 208	Page 213
<b>Parks</b>		
Ojibway Island Pulverize and Pave roadway and parking area	Project 171	Page 15
Ojibway Island Stage and Electrical Upgrades	Project 175	Page 57
Ojibway Island Bank Stabilization	Project 177	Page 270
Revitalize Wickes Park	Project 273	Page 28
Wickes Park Riverbank Development	Project 81	Page 46
Hoyt Park Upper and Lower Drive Resurfacing	Project 173	Page 16
Hoyt Park Building and Retaining Wall Infrastructure	Project 174	Page 17
Bliss Park Retreat	Project 359	Page 31
<b>Arts &amp; Culture</b>		
Arts & Culture Impact	Project 32	Page 299
<b>Neighborhood Associations</b>		
Neighborhood Grants	Project 215	Page 308
<b>Fairgrounds</b>		
Saginaw Fairground Development Project	Project 185	Page 22

<sup>i</sup> Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Final Rule, Page 157. U.S. Department of Treasury.

<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds>. Accessed August 2, 2022.

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<sup>iv</sup> Parents Forced to Choose between Keeping their Jobs or Taking Care of their Children. Forbes.

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<sup>v</sup> Coronavirus LFRF: Final Rule, Page 96. U.S. Department of Treasury. Accessed August 2, 2022.

<sup>vi</sup> Coronavirus LFRF: Final Rule, Page 97. U.S. Department of Treasury. Accessed August 2, 2022.

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