

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information, contact:

Patti Owens, Vice President & Managing Director
Catalyst Development Co., LLC
(269) 998-7665
powens@catalystdevco.com

New Seven-Story Mixed-Use Building to Bring More Jobs & Housing to Downtown Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo, Mich., April 12, 2018 – Catalyst Development Co., LLC (Catalyst) plans to break ground in July 2018 on a \$70 million, 290,000-square-foot mixed-use building in the heart of downtown Kalamazoo. The building is slated for a June 2020 completion date.

This development will be located at the southwest corner of North Edwards and Water Streets, overlooking Arcadia Creek Festival Place. Catalyst is transforming part of the city-owned Parking Lot 9 into a seven-story building with two floors of residential housing (41,000 square feet), four floors of Class-A office space (55,000 square feet), and a multi-level 300-plus space parking deck.

Architecture and engineering firm, TowerPinkster, and construction management company, CSM Group, have teamed together to help Catalyst realize its vision. “The overall design will express each of these uses in a contemporary, approachable open design aesthetic. The building aspires to be an icon, a beacon, in the City of Kalamazoo,” states TowerPinkster’s Director of Design, Jason Novotny. “Transparency to the groundbreaking programming contained within the building will allow tenants to shine, and inspire other cities to uplift their youth and communities.”

“There is a lot to like about this latest Catalyst project. It will include creative and office space for organizations like The Kalamazoo Promise® that are working to move our community forward,” said City of Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell. “It will provide new housing units for people at different income levels, and it makes better use of our land downtown, replacing a parking lot while still adding more parking spaces. This is the type of thoughtful development that we want to continue to see, not just downtown, but throughout the city.”

This development will bring new life to what is currently a surface parking lot, significantly improving the overall use through a place-making initiative; a mixed-use, high density development that maximizes green space and public areas. The design of the building will serve as a stimulant for further developments downtown. Combining spaces for living and working, building tenants and surrounding pedestrians will enjoy snowmelt sidewalks and convenient accessibility.

“We are excited about the opportunity to create a unique space with innovative tenants in the central core of Downtown Kalamazoo,” said Bill Johnston, owner of Catalyst Development Co. “Catalyst has been working for over two years to meet the programming needs of these collaborative organizations while simultaneously searching for design and application strategies that will enhance our downtown business district. The sense of community within the design and space is terrific. Collaboration, connectedness and community are all important elements of what this project brings to this important location. Commercial development companies don’t get many opportunities to combine all of these essentials, Catalyst intends to be a great steward of those opportunities.”

The development will positively transform lives and provide opportunities for thousands of people who live, work, and visit Kalamazoo.

Features and highlights of the development will include:

Tenants

The Kalamazoo Promise®: The Kalamazoo Promise® will expand its overall footprint with its move to the building. This new space will better accommodate its work with students and families, allow for the expansion of staff, as well as offer state-of-the-art collaborative meeting spaces, a computer lab, and a multi-purpose presentation facility. Plans will also take into account more family-friendly parking.

“We have been actively growing our organization and working to engage the community and our partners,” said Bob Jorth, executive director of The Kalamazoo Promise®. “This new space, along with our new talented and enthusiastic staff, will allow us to heighten our focus on community and business collaboration that ultimately leads to more students successfully completing their Promise.”

“The opportunity to expand our program and provide high-impact enhancement experiences to students in our space is exciting,” said Von Washington Jr., executive director of community relations for The Kalamazoo Promise®. “What we have learned over the past decade is that the scholarship is a gift that can transform a community—but only to the extent that everyone steps forward to make sure the Promise is kept. We envision this space as a hub for students to work on their studies, spend time with friends, while developing and honing their skills as they pursue college and career advancement.”

The Kalamazoo Promise Institute: A new think tank is being created to leverage the opportunity afforded to the community by The Kalamazoo Promise®; The Kalamazoo Promise Institute will also be headquartered at the building. Research and stakeholder engagement has identified specific goals for the community to be achieved through the The Kalamazoo Promise®, including: further increasing KPS’ graduation rates by identifying ways to reach students before they enter high school; better preparing graduates to achieve their post-secondary credentials; reducing the race and income-based segregation of Kalamazoo neighborhoods (especially those surrounding downtown); and additional means to make Kalamazoo a desirable place for both KPS graduates and new arrivals to live, work, plant roots, and raise a family.

Communities in Schools: Communities In Schools, Inc. (CIS) is the nation’s largest and most effective organization in addressing the dropout crisis. They place CIS Site Coordinators within schools to connect the right services to the right kids at the right time. Over 11,000 students have benefitted from a service coordinated by CIS and over 20 KPS schools have been served by CIS at the elementary, middle, and high school level.

Having a central, visible hub dedicated to the continued development of our children and youth is essential to the future of a thriving community. CIS and The Kalamazoo Promise® - working in close proximity – makes it possible for comprehensive approaches to overcome obstacles and to pursue continued partnerships and innovations to “get it right” for Kalamazoo.

Warner Norcross and Judd, LLP: One of the largest and most successful law firms in Michigan will relocate its Kalamazoo headquarters to the building to better service the people, organizations, and corporations in and around Kalamazoo.

“This project is a testament to the vibrancy of downtown Kalamazoo,” said Doug Dozeman, managing partner of Warner Norcross and Judd. “Since establishing a Kalamazoo office in 2013, we have added new attorneys and staff to support our growing client base and would like to consolidate a team under a single roof. Kalamazoo will benefit from the addition of a mixed-use development like the one proposed by Catalyst.”

Southwest Michigan First: The internationally-renowned economic development advisors for the seven-county region in Michigan will move its headquarters to the building.

“When you visit any of the world’s best cities, you experience remarkable infrastructure and the talented people who live and work there. These outward displays of growing economies are readily seen today in downtown Kalamazoo as building cranes, retail space, and pedestrians signal its intent to compete globally,” said Ron Kitchens, senior partner and chief executive officer of Southwest Michigan First. “As an organization focused on the economic success and performance of our region, our team finds this activity exhilarating. Usually happy in our role supporting the growth of others, today we are excited to announce that we will be part of the tangible manifestation of our region’s economic engine as future tenants of Catalyst’s new building. This new location, along with proximity to our co-tenants, will give us the opportunity to continue to bring together the regional leaders and business acumen to make more investments like this happen.”

Residential Units

Catalyst is building on its “downtown living” project portfolio, following DeVisser Place and Corporation Hall on the Kalamazoo Mall. Studio, one, and two-bedroom apartments will offer housing opportunities to a variety of residents, from professionals to empty nesters. Workforce housing units will be available at rates amenable to a wide range of tenants with a broad mix of incomes, fostering more diversity and vibrancy in Kalamazoo’s city center.

Employment

The new office space at the building will create an expansion of employment and spending in Kalamazoo, in addition to generating new city and state income and property taxes. Approximately 200 temporary jobs over 24 months will be created, in addition to permanent building positions. At this time, at least 30 new professional office jobs will be created. The Kalamazoo Promise and The Kalamazoo Promise Institute will grow from two to 20 full-time employees, following the move to the building, allowing it to expand programming.

Parking

While the city's Parking Lot 9 will be temporarily interrupted during construction, the net result will be an increase in downtown public parking. Catalyst's building will include a multi-level parking deck for 300-plus tenant and public parking spaces. Combined with the remaining parking spaces in Lot 9 following construction, the development will add 140 new parking spaces to the site.

###

About Catalyst Development Co., LLC

Catalyst is developer and owner of over 1.8 million square feet of Class A commercial, mixed-use and hospitality real estate in Michigan. Catalyst has a long history of developing award-winning projects in Kalamazoo, Birmingham and Grand Rapids.