



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

FY 2018 Recommended Budget

Narrative

The following narrative document outlines priority project areas developed with all three Alliances of DGRI over the past few months. Projects and funding represent commitments to on-going obligations, as well as existing, on-going, and new projects in the next fiscal year.

Development Incentive Programs

- *Areaway Fill*

Continued funding for the existing Areaway Removal Incentive Program. Program funds will be used cover existing obligations, and to continue to improve public safety through the removal of existing areaways. Funds are utilized to reimburse eligible activities, including removal of an areaway cap, construction of a new basement wall, sidewalk improvements, among others.

- *Building Reuse Incentive Program*

Request to continue funding the existing Building Reuse Incentive Program. Program funds will be used cover existing obligations, and to continue to assist property and business owners in the rehabilitation of buildings constructed pre-1950 in Downtown. Funds are utilized to reimburse eligible activities, including barrier free improvements, fire suppression upgrades, providing a second means of egress, and many others.

- *Development Project Guidance*

Funding for legal and staff time expended on behalf of facilitating development projects.

- *Development Support Reimbursements*

Continued funding for the existing Development Support Program. Program funds will be used to further promote economic growth and development in Downtown by funding approved eligible expenses in new construction projects over \$5 million in new investment and in rehabilitation projects featuring over \$1 million in new investment. Proposed funding is to cover existing obligations, and to capitalize on new opportunities.

- *Development Project Guidance*

Funding for legal and staff time expended on behalf of facilitating development projects.

- *Downtown Enhancement Grant*

Funding for the Downtown Enhancement Grant Program. Funds will be used cover existing obligations, and to continue to assist property and business owners in the rehabilitation of the

Downtown public realm. Funds are utilized to reimburse eligible activities, including installation of street furniture, snowmelt, and other public realm improvements

Downtown Planning

- *River Trail Economic Impact Analysis*

Economic analysis on the impact of the full build out of the Grand River trail for use in grant submissions and capital fundraising.

- *River Trail Design Guidelines*

Participation in project to create a distinct identity for the future river trail. Project is being conducted in collaboration with the City of Grand Rapids Engineer and Parks and Recreation Departments.

- *Downtown Streetscape Design Guidelines*

The project will create a cohesive strategy for the design and utilization of the public realm. Outcomes should provide guidance to developers regarding material choices, design, patterns, and other elements for urban streetscapes within the various Downtown neighborhoods. Further, it will provide guidance to tenants and operators about the placement and options for encroachments to assist in better enlivening the public realm.

Public Infrastructure

- *Arena South Implementation*

Funding to implement the Arena South Visioning Plan. Projects will include completion of the Cherry Street public space improvements, as well as the installation of new festoon lighting on Ionia Avenue.

- *Bridge Street Streetscape*

Contribution to improvements at Bridge and Cherry Street as a part of MDOT project. Improvements include installation of new lighting at both overpasses and a new sidewalk along Cherry Street. *This contribution is part of a larger project, totaling \$2,402,341, with contributions from the Vital Streets Fund (\$1,167,916), private foundations (\$53,000), Capital Improvement Fund (\$57,000) and a TAP Grant (\$973,425).*

- *Grand River Activation*

DDA contribution to complete the design and permitting for the restoration of the Grand River.

- *Grandville Avenue Area Public Improvements*

DDA contribution to implement the vision established in the Grandville Avenue Area Specific Plan. Improvements will occur within the DDA boundary on Grandville Avenue, and will likely include

pedestrian enhancements to improve the streetscape and walkability. The DDA will work with neighborhood stakeholders to help identify the implementation priorities.

- *Parks Design*

Design work for GR Forward park priority projects. Work in fiscal year 2018 will include schematic design work for Switchback Park and design development / construction drawings for Lyon Square.

- *Lyon Square Improvements*

This line item creates a placeholder for eventual capital investments in building Lyon Square.

- *Michigan Street / Ottawa Gateway*

DDA share of \$1 million project to improve the streetscape along Michigan Street near the hospital areas. Enhancements will include new lighting, trees and green infrastructure, along enhancements to improve pedestrian safety. This expenditure was already approved by the DDA Board.

- *Pearl Street Gateway Enhancements*

Completion of the pedestrian enhancements on Pearl Street between Mt. Vernon and the Grand River.

- *Sheldon Avenue Public Improvements*

Completion of pedestrian improvements, including new pavers, street trees and decorative lighting, along Sheldon Avenue from Fulton Avenue to Weston Street. The project will further the goal established in GR Forward to create a linear park that connects Cathedral Square to Crescent Park.

- *State Street and Bostwick Reconstruction*

DDA share of reconstruction project at State Street and Bostwick.

- *Streetscape Improvements*

Pedestrian enhancements along key Downtown corridors. Enhancements will include lighting, trees and safety elements to improve street crossings. Targeted streets include Division Avenue and Fulton Street.

- *Veteran's Park Improvements*

Construction of park improvements to implement the vision established by the Veterans and Monument Park Master Plan approved by the DDA Board in 2013. Costs for improvements will be reimbursed through the TIF from the Brownfield established for Fitzgerald condos. Construction is anticipated to begin spring 2017, and be complete spring 2018.

Livability

- Accessibility and Mobility Repairs

Funding to implement recommendations from the Downtown accessibility audit conducted by the Disability Advocates of Kent County.

- Affordable Housing Support

This line item creates an allocation of funding from the DDA to support the delivery of more affordable housing options in Downtown. Specific program(s) and / or uses of funds to be determined.

- Bike Friendly Improvements

Funding for bike parking infrastructure to expand the current program in partnership with MobileGR, the Traffic Safety Department, and the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition to enhance and expand bike parking options Downtown with a comprehensive bike parking plan (including new corrals, off-street parking, etc.). Funding to conduct a demand/feasibility analysis for a citywide bikeshare will also be provided through this line item.

- Downtown Census

Update to existing Downtown census. DGRI has committed to updating the census on a biannual basis to better understand the changing dynamics of the Downtown resident, employee and visitor populations.

- Heartside Public Restroom Facility

DDA contribution to the installation of restroom facilities in the Heartside neighborhood. The project will be conducted in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids, and the DDA funds will go toward costs associated with the construction of the facilities only.

- Public Realm Improvements

Funding for equipment to be utilized in partnership with the Downtown Ambassadors to repurpose and repair current refuse containers, as well as acquire new containers to address deficient areas with a focus on containers that can incorporate a public art component.

- Wayfinding

Funding to assess all current wayfinding systems to analyze efficiency and effectiveness, and understand areas of opportunity for improvement (including an assessment resting spaces and paratransit access points – loading zones, proximity to entrances, etc., as well as the Downtown street sign system).

Vibrancy

Committed Obligations

- *Ticketed Events: Police Services*

DDA contribution for GRPD police services for ticketed special events include those located at Van Andel Arena and DeVos Place for pedestrian safety. Additional food patrol services are provided in entertainment districts throughout the warmer months.

- *Police Foot Patrols*

DDA contribution to providing added public safety via additional police foot patrol services along key entertainment corridors throughout the summer months.

- *City of Grand Rapids Office of Special Events Support*

DDA contribution for The City of Grand Rapids Office of Special Event (OSE) support financially helps maintain and run the office's management in order to schedule, process and permit events looking to host an event within The City of Grand Rapids.

- *Rosa Parks Circle Ice Skating*

DDA contribution to Rosa Parks Circle Ice Skating helps to support skate rink operations including operations of the Zamboni, maintenance and upkeep of the rink.

- *Major Event Sponsorship*

DDA contribution to Major Event Sponsorship helps to support Downtown signature events like ArtPrize and LaughFest.

- *Bridge Lighting Operations*

DDA contribution to Bridge Lighting Operations helps to support electricity and maintenance for lighting on the Indiana Railroad Bridge (Blue Bridge) and the Gillett Bridge.

- *Downtown Marketing and Inclusion Efforts*

The DDA's contribution to Downtown Marketing helps support communications that promote Downtown events and programming initiatives to Downtown stakeholders, residents, businesses, and customer audiences. This includes but is not limited to paid advertising, the production of marketing collateral, and ongoing maintenance and enhancements of a digital media platform that serves more than 85,000 users and reaches tens of thousands more.

- *Economic Development – M/WBE*

This line item follows the approval of the DDA TIF and Development Plan amendments and embodies recommendations from GR Forward regarding growing the number of ground floor businesses in Downtown owned by women or minorities.

- *State of the Downtown Event/Annual Report*

DDA contribution to the State of the Downtown Event/Annual Report helps to support the programming activities and production for the annual event as well as the costs to support the marketing medium for DGRI's annual report

- *DGRI Event Production*

DDA contribution to DGRI Event Production contributes to the support of six Movies in the Park events, Snow Days, Valent-ICE, Light Up Downtown, Movies NOT in the Park, fundraising contract, and additional winter programming.

- *Diversity and Inclusion/Community Relations and Engagement Programming*

The DDA's contribution to Community Relations and Engagement helps support efforts to create a more welcoming and inclusive Downtown, attract and serve more multicultural audiences and strengthen community ties in and to the Downtown neighborhood. This work includes but is not limited to event support and production, program sponsorship and partnership building to advance the collective vision of Downtown for the benefit of the entire community.

- *Downtown Hospitality and Workforce Program*

DDA contribution to Downtown Workforce Program helps to support programming and other efforts in order to connect with the downtown workers of Grand Rapids. This could include, but not limited to; Broomball Leagues, exercise and fitness classes, Relax at Rosa event series, Downtown workforce network program, Relax at Rosa event series, Lunch & Learn series, merchant events, and marketing initiatives.

- *Holiday Décor Program*

DDA contribution to Holiday Décor Program helps to support the DDA's investment towards lighting and decorating the downtown during the holiday season. This continued support will allow DGRI to continue to decorate the downtown with the replacement of existing decoration investments.

- *Public Space Activation*

DDA contribution to Public Space Activation helps to continue and expand upon the Pop-Up Performer Program, public games, public artwork programs, murals, activation grant program, food truck initiatives, parks programming, and other enlivening interventions that help create an ambiance at atmosphere within the downtown.

- *Special Events: DGRI Sponsorship Support Program/Grant Programs*

DDA contribution to Special Events Event Sponsorship Support Program will help to support events happening within the downtown that are seeking event support and that align with the community goals that were voiced through the Special Events Optimization process finalized in FY15. This program will help us to support 10 events at a minimum per year.

- *Special Events Training Program*

DDA contribution to Special Events Training Program will help to support educational workshops for events training in order to help assist event planners and producers to successfully plan and manage an event within the downtown and the City of Grand Rapids.

- *Urban Recreation:*

Parks Programming

DDA contribution to Urban Recreation Programming helps to fund free outdoor fitness programming including Zumba, Werq, Kickboxing, and Pound classes as well as dancing classes including world dance, ballroom, and street beats. This program will also help to fund outdoor walking and running tours.

Winter Improvements

DDA contribution will help to add additional winter activities in the public realm and within Downtown parks to help activate area and months that are not normally heavily used with winter-themed temporary infrastructure and programming.

Calder/Rosa Temporary Improvements

DDA contribution to Calder and Rosa Parks Circle will help to contribute temporary improvements within the park to add additional amenities including seating, shading, greenery, and games.

Outdoor Fitness Programming Equipment

DDA contribution to outdoor fitness programming equipment will fund the effort to bring urban recreation outdoor fitness equipment to the Monroe North district.