



# Alliance for Livability

*“Purpose: Advise on DGRI-related programs, services, and investments related to cleanliness and safety, mobility, beautification, asset management, and urban recreation.”*

October 26, 2015

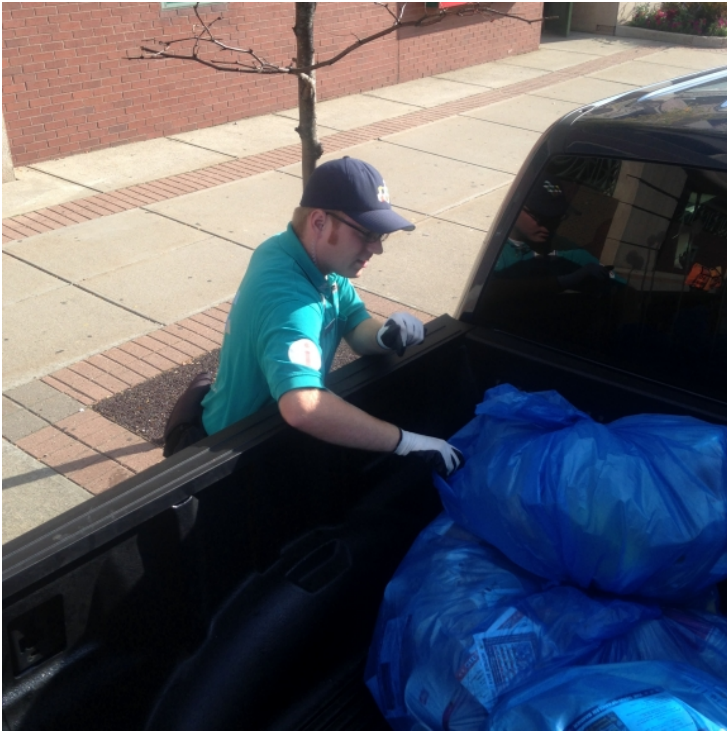
11:00am – 12:30pm

29 Pearl Street, NW Suite #1

## Agenda

**Main work item:** *Work Group input on upcoming projects and events.*

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment, Current Business – 3 minutes per person
3. Consent agenda items (Eledge, GRPD) – 10 minutes
4. LakerLine Project Update (Wells) – 10 minutes
5. Skatepark Update (Wells) – 10 minutes
6. HUD Resiliency Grant Application Update (Guy) – 15 minutes
7. Working Groups (Full Alliance) – 30 Minutes
  - a. Clean/Safe/Beautiful – Public Art: phase 2, Monroe North Gateway
  - b. Urban Recreation – Winter Events/Rec update/ideas (Kim VanDriel, DGRI staff, will assist)
  - c. Mobility – DASH/Circulator infrastructure
  - d. Engagement – WMCAT art project review, next steps/new project ideas
8. Public Comment, Old/Other Business – 3 minutes per person
9. Adjourn



# **Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassador Program**

## **September 2015 Report**



# Outreach Highlights



Kevin and AMR assist a man in Heartside in need of medical attention.

## Initiatives

The Ambassador team has partnered with Degage Ministries who provided vouchers for the team to distribute during Art Prize.

The team has been using the vouchers as an educational tool for people who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with how to respond to panhandling, we explain the many services that an individual can acquire through the use of the voucher and how providing vouchers is a better alternative to just giving cash.

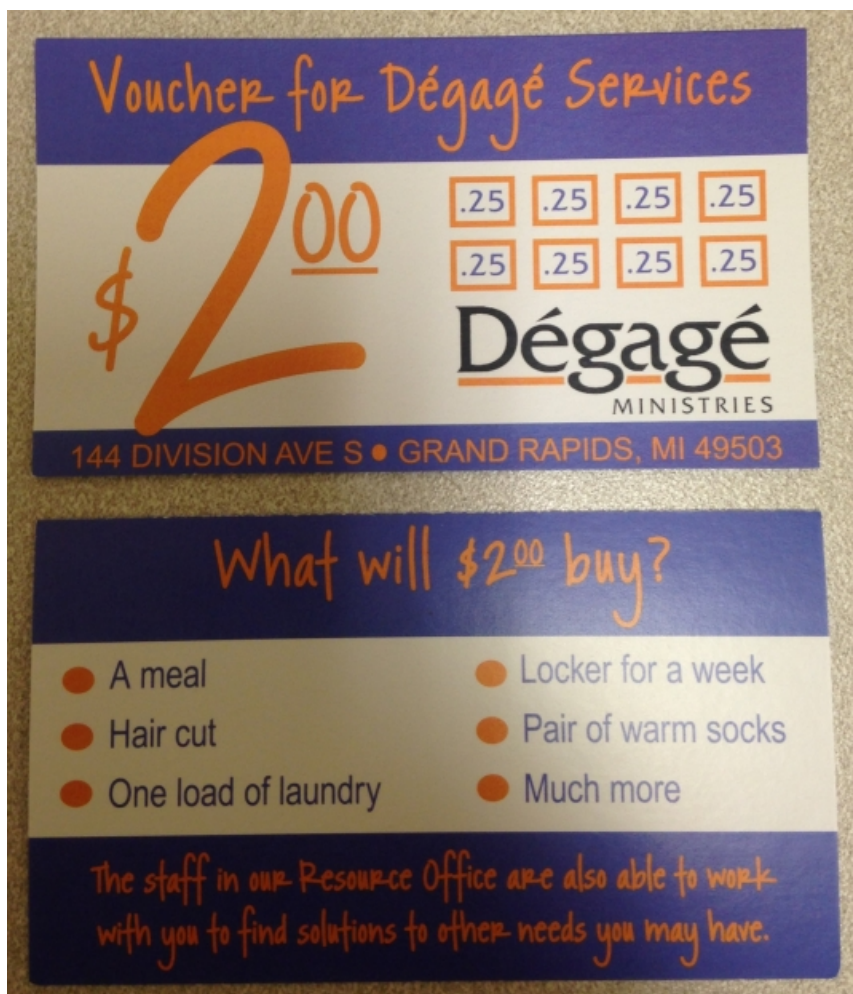
## QUICK VIEW

Sep 01, 2015 -- Sep 30, 2015

**85** Panhandling - Passive

**119** Panhandling - Aggressive

**2244** Outreach Contact



Degage Vouchers



# Safety & Hospitality Highlights



Veronica provides a safety escort for two women on Monroe Center



Rebecca jump starts a car on Weston near Ionia St.

## Initiatives

The Ambassador team provided enhanced deployment for Art Prize, expanding our hours of operation from 6 days a week to 7 as well as expanding our hours of operation to include Saturday mornings. We have also added additional shifts throughout the week to supplement the existing staff schedule.

The Ambassador team also provided enhanced deployment for Hispanic festival as well as maintained its ongoing enhanced deployment for Tuesday nights.

## QUICK VIEW

Sep 01, 2015 -- Sep 30, 2015

- 5** Suspicious Package
- 11** Motorist Assistance
- 13** Request for Police
- 16** Observation - Fighting
- 27** Request for Fire/EMS
- 33** Umbrella Escorts
- 34** Segway Hours
- 127** Suspicious Person
- 143** Business Contact
- 161** Bicycle (miles)
- 1372** Sidewalk Violation (skateboarding/Bicycling/Rollerblading)
- 3196** PA - Program Information
- 4049** PA - Directions
- 9635** PA - Information
- 13196** PA - Other

# Cleaning Highlights



Terrill removes loads trash into a dumpster



Eryn removes a sticker from a newspaper box

## Initiatives

For Art Prize 7 the Ambassador team was asked to augment existing trash removal efforts being undertaken by Grand Rapids Parks Department, Office of Special Events, Public Works and the DGRI Clean Team.

The Ambassador team procured a truck and began performing trash and refuse collection outside of the other department's typical deployment schedule. The Ambassador team removed 314 bags from Sept. 23rd through Sept. 30th.

## QUICK VIEW

Sep 01, 2015 -- Sep 30, 2015

**52** Graffiti - Removed

**314** Trash (Bags collected)



# Stakeholder Feedback

## Feedback

My name is Keith Murphy and I am writing in regards to your Ambassador program and the phenomenal interaction my family and I had with one of your Ambassadors. We currently live on the East side of the state and my wife and I have been seriously considering on moving to Grand Rapids. It has been roughly 5 years since we have visited GR so we planned a few days to bring our 3 children to the city and explore. We were in town from Wednesday the 16th to Friday the 18th and stayed at the JW Marriott downtown. I really had nothing planned for the trip and just wanted to have a fun time exploring with my family. After we checked in and rested for a bit we decided to head out and find a restaurant for dinner. We were only walking for a few minutes before we ended up running into Kevin, one of your Ambassadors.. I'm not sure if it was because my wife was looking at her phone finding local restaurants but Kevin geated us and asked if there was anything he could help us with. I told Kevin we had just checked into our hotel and that we were looking for a place to eat. Kevin was enthusiastic and extremely knowledgeable but more importantly he genuinely cared about making sure we were going to have a great time in Grand Rapids. He gave us several different restaurant choices and an idea of what we would find there, he even took our children into consideration. We ended up deciding on HopCat because it was still early enough to get our children in and it sounded like a cool place to start our trip (and I was really interested in their beer selection Kevin told me about haha). We met Kevin near Rosa Parks Circle and he gave us directions to the restaurant but ended up walking all the way to HopCat with us! Along the way Kevin asked us what brought us to Grand Rapids and when I explained that we were checking out the city as a possible new place to call home Kevin responded with, "Possible?" and went on to say "You have 2 nights and 3 days to see why you should already be living here!" He kept the conversation informative but had a great sense of humor and made it fun. He gave us several ideas of what to do and see while we were in town and recommended some of his favorite things that make GR special. Neither my wife or I had every heard of an Ambassador program before but I cannot tell you how absolutely blown away we were by your program and its services. I was happy to hear that Detroit has recently added an Ambassador program to the downtown area and it will be exciting to watch as it helps Detroit make the comeback it deserves!

My family and I had a truly amazing time in GR and can honestly say that I left feeling confident in making a decision on relocating my family. There is an energetic "buzz" of growth and opportunities in your city and it's easy to see why Grand Rapids is getting the attention it clearly deserves. So thank you for your hospitality, and please pass that along to Kevin because he helped make our visit extra special!

Sincerely,

Keith Murphy



# Stakeholder Feedback

## Feedback

These folks are a GENIUS idea!! Every one that I meet is just as wonderful as the last. We are street musicians who spend a lot of time downtown. Our first encounter with your team was several years ago....a young man named Kevin. He's our favorite, and we seek him out when we're there. But on opening day of Artprize, there were many friendly, helpful, professional ambassadors about....including Eryn, Abbie, Veronica, and Tyler. I was especially impressed with how they handle the homeless population. They often greeted them by name, and treated them with the same respect they gave to everyone. It was clear that the "street people" had relationships with your ambassadors, and the value of that humanity can't be underestimated. Great job on your training program. Give these young folks a big "Hurrah!"

Stacy and Jonathan with Beaver Xing Band.

I would just like to take a moment in recognizing Abbie's wonderful service. My gratitude is very great for her knowledge of the city, personability, and compassion. She takes service with a smile literally and figuratively, and for that I am also grateful.

Thank you for hiring her, Casey.

I just wanted to drop you a note and tell you what a great job Veronica does. I see her regularly in the community greeting people, picking up trash, answering questions the public has and attempting to move the homeless from public areas. She always has a smile on her face and is always so friendly even when others are not. She is a credit to the Ambassadors program and thought she deserved some recognition.

Sincerely,

Tim Clonan

Eryn was on Wealthy Street and provided very specific directions to Franklin street. She was very very helpful.

I met Amanda on Saturday at the Polish Heritage Fest. She was great I asked for directions to the nearest printing facialty and was properly directed. What a great concept. We should have these in Chicago.

Thanks,

Bob





# Highlights



Veronica talks with a little girl sitting on the new DGRI Parklet



Terrill removes a sticker on Michigan Ave.



Abbie provides directions and a map on Ottawa Ave.



Melvin removes a trash bag on Monroe Center



# THE GRAND STRATEGY

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BUILDING ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE IN THE GRAND RIVER WATERSHED

## SIDE A

### THE NATIONAL DISASTER RESILIENCE COMPETITION

Kent County communities, in partnership with the State of Michigan, are among 40 finalists nationwide competing for \$800 million in federal funds dedicated to help communities recover from past disasters while improving their capacity to prepare for, withstand, and bounce back rapidly from future extreme events. The competition is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation.

### THE GRAND RIVER

Michigan’s longest river and a major tributary to Lake Michigan, the sixth largest freshwater lake in the world.

### THE GRAND STRATEGY

An innovative blueprint for action to protect and enhance vulnerable communities along a 40-mile stretch of the Grand River as it flows through the heart of Michigan’s second largest population center. The Grand Strategy will decrease the costly risks of extreme flooding and maximize the river’s value as a distinct economic, ecological and social asset. The Strategy also will demonstrate a new nature-based flood management approach and serve as a replicable model for waterfront communities across Michigan, the Great Lakes and beyond.

### A REGIONAL RESILIENCY INITIATIVE

The Strategy aligns with the following community plans:

- Master Plans & Zoning Ordinances in the Cities of Grand Rapids, Grandville, Lowell, Walker and Wyoming; Plainfield Charter Township; and the Townships of Ada, Cascade and Lowell.
- TIF Development Plan for Monroe North
- GR Forward Strategic Plan
- Grand Rapids Sustainability Plan
- Green Grand Rapids Plan
- Grand Rapids Climate Resiliency Strategy
- Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Plan
- Grand Rapids Vital Streets Investment Plan
- Grand Rapids Stormwater Asset Management Plan
- Grand Rapids Water & Sewer Capital Improvement Plan
- Kent County Capital Improvement Plan
- Kent County Parks Master Plan
- Kent County/Grand Rapids Emergency Action Guidelines
- Kent County/Grand Rapids Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan
- TIF Development Plan for Downtown Grand Rapids
- Michigan Street Corridor Plan
- Kent County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance

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## KEY OBJECTIVES

Transform 1 urban waterfront

Protect 22,000+ vulnerable floodplain residents

Enhance flood retention on 1,544 acres of land

Build 160 miles of “green” streets

Remove 5 obsolete dams

Restore 92 acres of wetland

Rehab 25 miles of streams and drains

## OUTCOMES

Sustain One of America’s Fastest Growing Economies

Stronger Regional Collaboration & Resilience

Improved Recreational Opportunities

New Job & Housing Opportunity

Accelerate Urban Revitalization

Nature-Based Flood Protection

Restored Fish Habitat and Passage

People Reconnected To Their Waterway

Catalyze Economic Development

Healthier Ecosystem

Lower Base Flood Elevation

Higher Quality Water

Reduced Sediment Load

Improve Public Safety

Improved Public Health

Reduced Flood Risk

## ACTIVITIES

Deploy Green Infrastructure to Slow Down Stormwater Runoff

Protect Critical Electric Systems

Landscape Restoration

Develop Parks and Greenways

Improve Floodplain Storage

Protect Energy Facility

Rehab Streams and Drains

Improved Watershed Mapping and Monitoring

Integrate Climate and Resilience Education

Demonstrate Nature-Based Flood Management

Demolish and Remove Dangerous Low-Head Dams

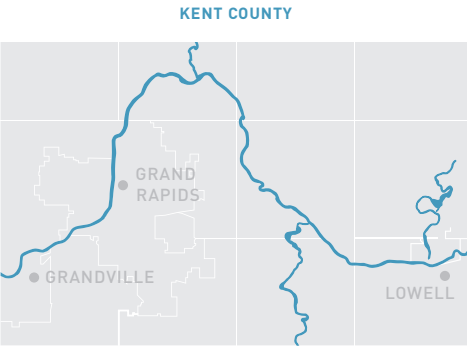
Expand Public Acces to the River

Protect Wastewater Treatment Plant

Reestablish and Expand Riparian Habitat

Acquire Flood-Prone Land

Rehab Healthy Homes





# WEST MICHIGAN'S URBAN CORE

WATERFRONT CITY REVITALIZATION  
AND RESILIENCE

SIDE B

### THE REGION'S HUB

Kent County anchors a region of 1.5 million people and one of America's fastest growing economies. The City of Grand Rapids is the county seat. Downtown Grand Rapids was founded on the Grand River, which flows approximately 7 miles thru the urban core, illustrated at right.

### THE THREAT

Average annual rainfall in the area has increased 16 percent in the last 60 years. The trend is expected to continue or possibly accelerate, as climate change projections predict more frequent flash downpours, rising extreme precipitation events and higher flood levels. FEMA now deems the existing urban flood protection system deficient. Meanwhile central city population continues to increase – 15 percent in the past 10 years.

### THE OPPORTUNITY

The Grand Strategy includes forward-looking community investments to transform the gray industrial urban waterfront into a series of connected green and blue infrastructure assets that significantly improve flood protection and deliver far-reaching environmental, social, recreational and economic benefits. These investments will protect the urban core from a 500-year flood event and ensure the city achieves "sound reach" designation by FEMA.

### Key Grand River Modifications & Flood Events

(Flood Stage is 18 ft)

1835	Power canals cut in to riverbanks
1866	Downtown dam installed for power generation
1904	"The Great Flood" crests at 19.5, submerging 2,500 homes and 14,000 residents; shuts down 50 factories putting 8,000 employees out of work.
1905	Ninth highest crest to date (18.6 ft)
1911	City of Grand Rapids completes flood wall construction.
1927	Four low-rise dams installed to manager water levels Downtown.
1934	Flood wall system expanded
1936	Flood wall system expanded
1960	Seventh highest crest to date (19.25 ft)
1976	Fifth highest crest to date (19.29 ft)
1982	Eighth highest crest to date (18.83 ft)
1985	Second highest crest to date (19.64 ft)
1986	Sixth highest crest to date (19.25 ft)
1997	Tenth highest crest to date (17.87 ft)
2004	Third highest crest to date (19.54 ft)
2013	Highest crest in community's history at 21.85 ft causes tens of millions of dollars in damage to public and private property. This was not even a 25-year flood event.

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## WHITEWATER RESTORATION

The City of Grand Rapids now prepares to remove several obsolete dams and restore the Grand River's historic whitewater rapids. The project will reduce the river's base flood elevation, enhance the natural ecology, catalyze redevelopment at the water's edge and increase river access and recreational amenities in the urban core. Whitewater restoration alone is conservatively estimated to annually generate \$15-\$19 million in new economic activity. The project was designated an Urban Waters Federal Partnership Pilot Program priority in 2013.



BEFORE



AFTER

## RIVERFRONT OPPORTUNITY SITES

Some two dozen sites in the urban core will evolve from a gray to green flood protection system connected by an urban trail. The plan is to remove rigid floodwalls at strategic locations and install more nature-based, multipurpose infrastructure. The reimagined sites will feature wetland terraces and tiered landscapes that improve storm water management and significantly strengthen the city's ability to absorb and endure major flood events. The innovative design will reinforce the whitewater restoration initiative, support healthier habitat, establish new open space and greatly expand public access to the river.



BEFORE



AFTER

## CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE RIVER

The fully restored Grand River corridor in the urban core – which includes whitewater rapids, the riverfront trail and reimagined opportunity sites – will function as a unified and regionally connected park system that will serve as a tremendous quality of life asset for Grand Rapids and the West Michigan. As the corridor primarily runs north/south through the urban core, a series of east/west green corridors will connect residents to their Grand River so the entire community can use and enjoy the restored waterway.



BEFORE



AFTER



# Statistics

Activity	Sept. 2015 Total	Sept. 2014 Total	Variance	2014/2015 Year End	2015/2016 YTD
Bicycle (miles)	169	233	(64)	1141.45	72
Segway Hours	39	60	(21)	269.42	18.5
Business Contact	147	706	(559)	4400	38
Graffiti - Removed	59	596	(537)	1435	15
Motorist Assistance	11	11	0	136	3
Observation - Fighting	16	39	(23)	483	2
Outreach Contact	2304	0	2304	73026	503
PA - Directions	6038	9176	(3138)	33356	1860
PA - Information	10310	14807	(4497)	71094	3129
PA - Other	15884	20200	(4316)	119370	4195
PA - Program Information	3655	8983	(5328)	40941	1170
Panhandling - Aggressive	119	292	(173)	1802	32
Panhandling - Passive	85	382	(297)	1498	33
Request for Fire/EMS	27	12	15	226	10
Request for Police	14	10	4	135	1
Safety Escort	4103	3386	717	19762	1561
Sidewalk Violation	1395	2619	(1224)	7583	393
Suspicious Package	5	92	(87)	869	0
Suspicious Person	129	555	(426)	4617	22
Trash (Bags collected)	323	0	323	82	252
Umbrella Escorts	33	255	(222)	962	1
<b>Total Contacts September 2015</b>	<b>44657</b>	<b>62121</b>	<b>(17464)</b>	<b>381777</b>	<b>13220</b>
<b>Total Contacts September 2014</b>					
<b>Total Variance (2015 v. 2015)</b>					
<b>Total Contacts YTD 2014/2015</b>					
<b>Total Contacts YTD 2015/2016</b>					

September 2015 showed a 28% decrease in our overall contacts for the month when compared to the same period the year before. We continue to train our newest staff on effectively inputting data into the SMARTSystem and recording their contacts accurately to overcome their inexperience with the system and data collection.

Despite the reduction in contacts between the two months our overall contacts increased by 47% from our previous year's final contact total of 259,204. The ambassador team has set a goal to increase its total contacts made during Art Prize to 112,000, a 50% increase compared to 74,443 contacts made during Art Prize 2014.