



Alliance for Livability

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

November 23, 2015

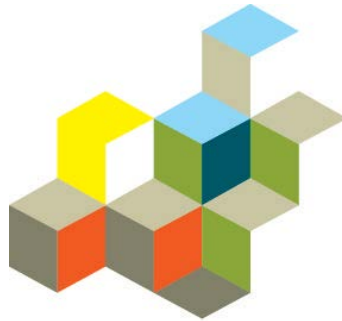
11:00am – 12:30pm

29 Pearl Street, NW Suite #1

Agenda

Main work item: *Diversity/Inclusion/Equity Engagement plan input; workgroup projects.*

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment, Current Business – 3 minutes per person
3. Consent agenda items (Eledge, GRPD) – 10 minutes
4. DGRI Engagement Plan overview (Guy/Traylor) – 20 minutes
5. GRForward Discussion: Housing and Diversity/Inclusion/Equity initiatives (Kirk/Wells) – 15 minutes
6. Working Groups (Full Alliance) – 40 Minutes
 - a. Clean/Safe/Beautiful – Monroe North Gateway goals and concepts
 - b. Mobility – Protected bike lane/cycle track on Ionia: goals and concepts
 - c. Engagement – WMCAT signal boxes project review, next steps/new project ideas
 - d. Urban Recreation – Winter Livability ideas
7. Public Comment, Old/Other Business – 3 minutes per person
8. Adjourn



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Alliance for Livability

October 26, 2015

1. Call to order- Lynee Wells called the meeting to order at 11:09am
2. Members Present: Asante Cain, Robert Dean, Joe Elliott, Stephen Faber, Christian Frank, Matt Koning, Lance Marconi, Marcia Rapp, Jen Schaub, Jay Schrimpf, Lynee Wells

Members Absent: Amy Baas, Shaun Biel, Trevor Bosworth, Kim Dabbs, Dr. Wendy Falb, John Helmholdt, James Hurt, Johannah Jelks, Chris Muller, Nate Phelps

Others Present: Bill Kirk, Murphy Ackerman, Officer Eric Gizzi, Aaron Terpstra, Melvin Eledge, Tim Kelly, Annamarie Buller, Andy Guy

3. Safety Updates-
Officer Gizzi offered to answer any questions regarding public safety in the Downtown. Cain asked if there are updates on the loitering in Veteran's Park. Officer Gizzi responded that there has been an increased police presence in Veteran's park but is aware that the activity has moved to the library. Wells asked why the benches in front of the library were removed. Cain responded that the group that has been loitering in front of the library on the benches has recently become violent, and it was a temporary solution until a long term solution can be reached. Wells thanked Officer Gizzi for the continued updates.
Eledge gave an update on the Downtown Ambassadors. Eledge explained that during ArtPrize the team was able to help with trash removal. Eledge said that while this was not a task usually done by the Ambassadors, it was one that they were happy to provide. Eledge said that he is currently interviewing to help with the transition and absorption of the Clean Team by Block by Block. Wells asked what the changes in scope are with the new contract. Eledge responded that the team currently does not perform cleaning services, and trash removal was a special circumstance for ArtPrize. Cain asked if both the Downtown Ambassadors and the Clean Team wearing the same uniforms will confuse visitors in Downtown. Eledge explained that the intention is to have both team cross trained so that all team

members are able to work as a Downtown concierge service.

4. Laker Line Project Update-

Wells explained that Williams & Works is currently working on the Laker Line in partnership with the Rapid. Wells gave an overview of the current progress on the Laker Line and the community engagement that has gone into the process thus far. Wells said that the current task is defining where the stations will be located. With the Laker Line running from GVSU's Downtown campus to CHS Medical Mile, the current route 50 would be eliminated. Wells explained that the current BRT has implemented tools to lessen the dwell time at each station and will save the route approximately five minutes. Wells added that this will help to ease congestion in the corridor. Wells explained that there are several stops in the DGRI boundary that the Alliance could give input on. Wells added that the Rapids is currently working with Spectrum to allow the route to turn around in their parking lot. Wells said that the alignment is currently undetermined until agreements are reached with Spectrum. Wells explained that she would like the Alliance to begin taking a lead on opportunities for streetscapes and placemaking to make these stops more attractive and amenitized. Wells said that the goal is start construction in early 2017 with the completion at the end of 2017. Rapp asked about security at the stations. Wells responded that each station has security cameras, snowmelt, lighting, and emergency phones. Marconi asked if there is opportunity within the budget to create apps for tracking and routing services. Wells said that each BRT station has a tracker, but the Rapid is still working to provide more up to date tracking information. Kirk added that there are several third party apps but the Rapid does not have one internally.

5. Skatepark Update-

Wells gave an update on the Downtown skatepark. Wells shared that there was a focus group meeting held last week to help identify the best potential sites for the skatepark. Instead of testing out various options with smaller movable parks, the committee has decided to find the best location and move forward. Wells said that the current favored location is planned for Bridge and Scribner. The committee would like the park to be in the core and to be a destination as well as an activator for an area. Wells added that the hope is to have the skatepark connected to transit, a plaza design as opposed to a bowl, and able to be used for events. Frank added that without the DDA recommending locations that would be available, it felt like an uphill battle to select locations with other developments possibly being plan and would like to seek guidance from the board. Cain asked about the lot located by the Rapid. Wells responded that this lot is currently not available with impending development. Wells explained that the committee is looking to set deadlines to get the design and RFP out this budget cycle. Schaub asked how the parking landscape has shifted and why the lot by the Rapid is not an option. Kirk explained that with development on Area 1 and development planned for Areas 4 and 5, the parking system is becoming constrained. Cain asked if there was a more recent event that has further effected parking availability. Kirk said that with the recent announcement of Spectrum moving to 25 Ottawa and the added businesses seeking to relocate Downtown, parking continues to be at the top of mind for DGRI. Schaub said that if every DDA lot is going to be set aside for parking then the Alliance should be made aware. Kirk explained that the DDA would not sell the land if they did not see the proper use for it, but also has not designated any lot undevelopable and for parking only. Kirk

explained that the current reality is that the potential theater project will displace parking for a period of time, and the DDA is currently working with Parking Services to use all parking assets more efficiently during this time of transition. Cain asked what the current development plan for Area 6a is. Kirk responded that ultimately this would not be an ideal location for a skatepark regardless of the parking conditions. Schaub asked what the projections for future parking is and how DGRI plans to get there. Schaub added that she is frustrated that the land owned by the DDA is not being considered for public use and is being set aside for parking. Kirk explained that this is not guess work but a strategic plan and that DGRI is focused on the need to balance the pursuit of new development with the constraints of the parking supply. Kirk reiterated that the goal of the DDA is not to preserve parking on 6a in the long term but that it is currently a strategic spot for parking in the coming years based on planned developments. Cain asked how DGRI is working to balancing pricing and private lots. Kirk explained that there isn't enough room to absorb the new development parking needs in the DDA lots. Faber asked if there was a conversation about how many skaters can be housed in the skatepark at one time. Faber asked the Alliance to consider that there will be a tension there, as the skating community will always need more space. Wells explained that the group will continue to meet, and the group is willing to go in front of the DDA board to help find a solution.

6. HUD Resiliency Grant Application Update-

Guy gave an overview of the HUD resiliency grant that DGRI recently submitted in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County. Guy explained that Grand Rapids is eligible for the grant due to the floods in 2013. Guy shared that Grand Rapids is competing with forty other communities for a pot of 800 million dollars worth of funding. Guy said that the goal is to begin working on rethinking land and water assets and working to move away from reactionary flood walls and towards greener, multi-purpose infrastructure. Guy added that this has been presented as not only a river restoration and flood protection package, but a community revitalization project. Guy said that 200 million dollars in local funds have already been secured to help leverage more federal funds. Faber asked what the implementation timeline is if the funding is secured. Guy explained that this is an accelerated process and HUD wants to see the funds used within two years of distribution. Wells asked Guy how the Grand Rapids application is looking compared to the rest. Guy responded that he's seen almost all of the applications, and believes that Grand Rapids will be in the top five in terms of the regional approach and size of the ask.

7. Workgroups -

Kirk explained that workgroups will be moved due to time constraint.

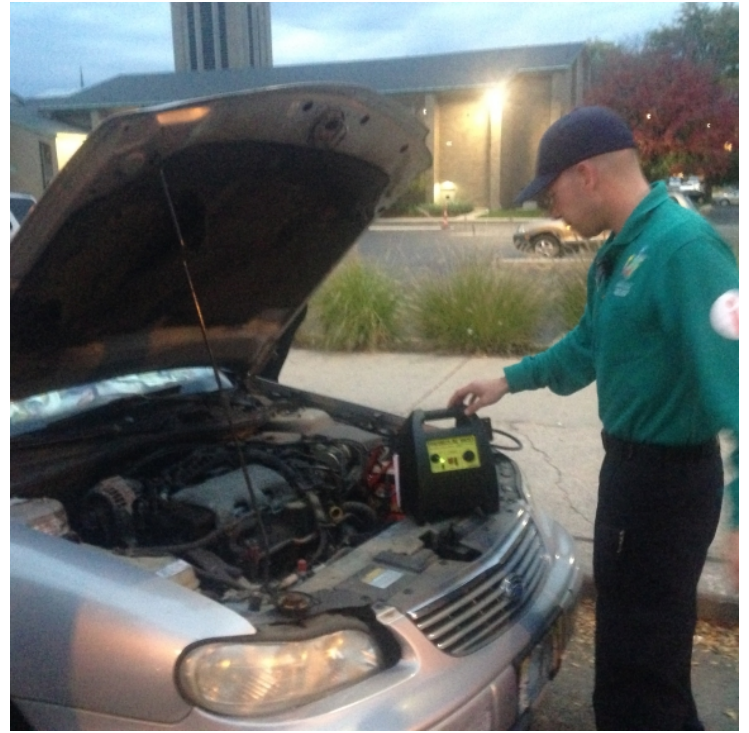
Kirk gave a brief overview of current projects. Rotondaro is continuing to work on the Downtown census and will be able to present more findings in the coming months. Kirk said the RFP for Calder plaza has been distributed and will be looking for members of the Alliance to review the proposals in the coming months. Kirk said that the timeline for completion of that project is slated for 2017. Kirk explained that construction of Veteran's Park will need to happen first. Kirk shared that he continues to work with Parking Services and stakeholders to transition workers out of Area's 4 and 5. Kirk added that DGRI has been working to put together a comprehensive mobility strategy to relocate the

parkers. Kirk shared that the public comment period for GR Forward has closed, and staff is working to make edits to the plan by the end of the week. Kirk said that the plan is scheduled for final approval at the December City Commission meeting pending approval at the Planning Commission meeting. Wells thanked the Alliance for all of their input with GR Forward.

8. Public Comment – Old/Other Business-
None

9. Adjourn –
Wells adjourned the meeting at 12:20pm

Minutes taken by:
Murphy Ackerman
Office Manager
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.



Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassador Program October 2015 Report



Outreach Highlights



Rebecca talks with a panhandler who sits on the side of Mt. Vernon & US 131

Initiatives

The ambassador team continued to use the vouchers provided by Degage ministries to educate the general public as well as offer people who needed a meal an alternative to panhandling for money.

The vouchers have been used successfully by the team as engagement tool for both the general public and those who identify themselves as homeless.

Our outreach specialist, Kevin, has gone through and updated our existing resources manual with new information from a variety of Social Service Agencies in the area. The manual is a valuable tool for our team to reference when offering suggestions for resources to individuals.

QUICK VIEW

Oct 02, 2015 -- Nov 01, 2015

58 Panhandling - Passive

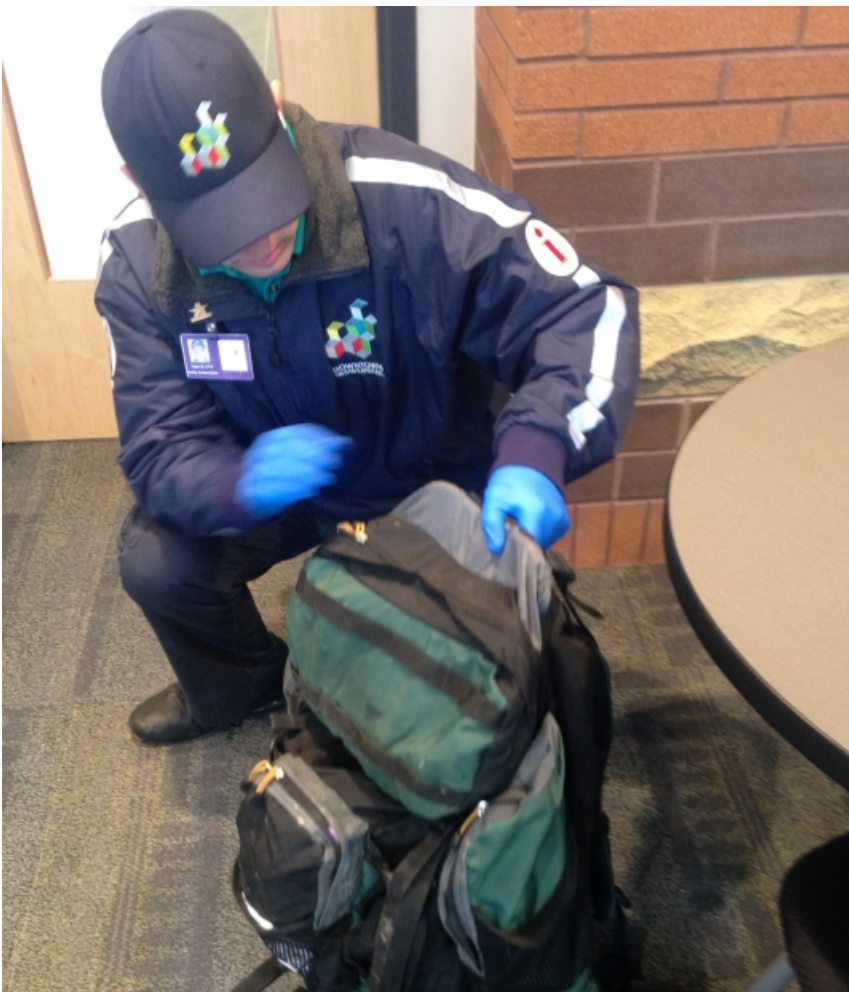
137 Panhandling - Aggressive

1358 Outreach Contact

Safety & Hospitality Highlights



Kevin provides motorist assistance



Tyler attempts to identify the owner of a lost bag

Initiatives

The Ambassador team continued to provide enhanced deployment for the remainder of Art Prize as well as Halloween on Ionia. For Art Prize we expanded our hours of operation from 6 to 7 days per week and added additional staffing on Saturday mornings as well as augmented existing shifts with additional staff.

For Halloween on Ionia we added additional staff to the evening and overnight shifts as a response to the expected increase of visitors to the downtown area. The rain and colder weather early in the evening gave the event a slow start but once the rain stopped the crowd for HOI increased and downtown as a whole became busier as additional venues were also hosting halloween themed events.

QUICK VIEW

Oct 01, 2015 -- Nov 01, 2015

- 3** Suspicious Package
- 12** Request for Police
- 16** Segway Hours
- 23** Motorist Assistance
- 23** Umbrella Escorts
- 25** Request for Fire/EMS
- 34** Observation - Fighting
- 56.2** Bicycle (miles)
- 61** Suspicious Person
- 279** Business Contact
- 426** Sidewalk Violation (skateboarding/Bicycling/Rollerblading)
- 1326** PA - Program Information
- 2582** PA - Directions
- 3853** PA - Information
- 7208** PA - Other

Cleaning Highlights



Eryn removes graffiti from a bus stop sign



Graffiti on a utility cap before & After

Initiatives

The Ambassador team continued to augment existing trash removal efforts being conducted by Grand Rapids Parks, DGRI Clean Team, GR Public Works and Special Events. We ended Art Prize 7 having collected over 500 bags of trash, 221 of which was collected in the two weeks of Art Prize occurring in October.

In addition to removing trash the ambassador team took advantage of the warmer weather and also stepped up our graffiti removal efforts post Art Prize, removing stickers, markers, paint etc. that was found on public infrastructure.

QUICK VIEW

Oct 01, 2015 -- Nov 01, 2015

221 Trash (Bags collected)

181 Graffiti - Removed

Stakeholder Feedback

Feedback

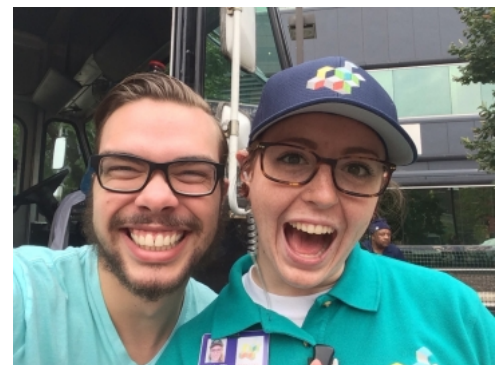
We are writing to pass along a positive review that we had with one of your ambassadors, Kevin. Co-workers in our building have previously used the services that the Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassadors provide, so we knew who to call when we're in trouble.

On Thursday night, Oct. 8th, after our ArtPrize volunteer shift at the HUB, we contacted DGRI for an umbrella escort when we got caught in a downpour. We had about a 10 minute walk back to our car...no umbrellas...and no rain jackets...d'oh! Kevin showed up very quickly after we called. He brought two umbrellas and walked us back to our car. While Kevin escorted us to our car, he informed us about all the activities that downtown ambassadors do to make Grand Rapids a safer and friendlier place. He explained to us how he helps out at the homeless camps, which is a very selfless act. The entire time Kevin was very polite, friendly, and made us feel safe walking to our car in the dark. Because of the positive experience that we had with Kevin, we'd recommend DGRI to anyone in need.

Thank you,
Jennifer and Samantha

Abbie was helpful in giving us the latest details about what was going on at ArtPrize yesterday!

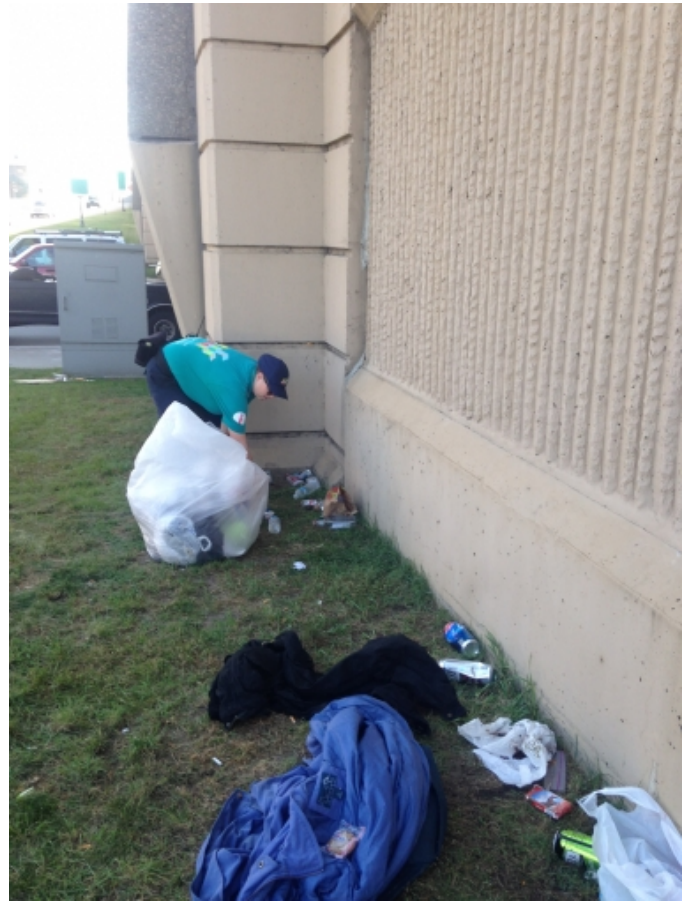
I am writing to express my appreciation for one of your downtown ambassadors. Veronica always greets everyone with a wonderful smile and willingness to assist in anyway possible. Often I have witnessed Veronica picking up trash from the ground and depositing it in the trash receptacles. She is truly an amazing ambassador for the City of Grand Rapids!



Highlights



Melvin provides a motorist assistance



Rebecca cleans the area near US 131



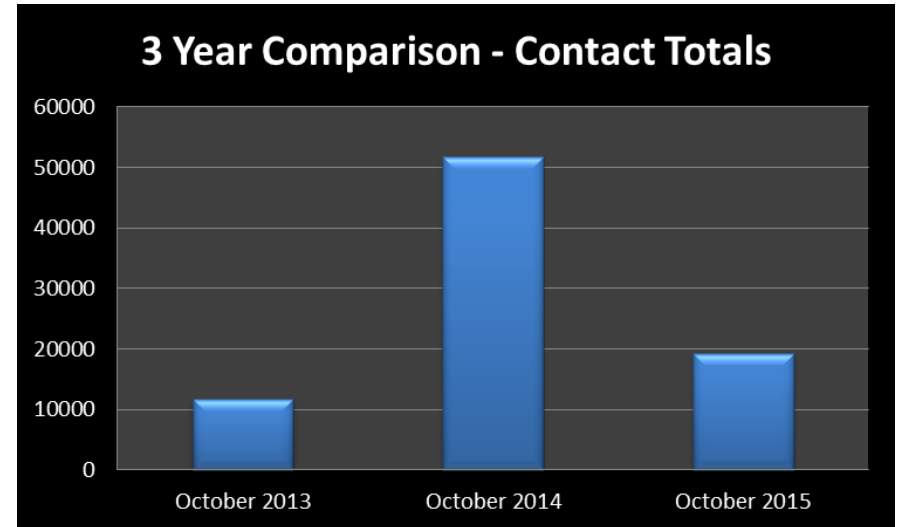
Empty doggie waste station before and after



DGR1 way finding sign before and after

Statistics

Activity	Oct. 2015 Total	Oct. 2014 Total	Variance	2015/2016 YTD
Bicycle (miles)	56.2	179	-122.8	128.2
Segway Hours	16	59.92	-43.92	34.5
Business Contact	309	428	-119	347
Graffiti - Removed	183	163	20	198
Motorist Assistance	23	9	14	26
Observation - Fighting	38	20	18	40
Outreach Contact	1441	4642	-3201	1944
PA - Directions	2714	6902	-4188	4574
PA - Information	4077	11513	-7436	7206
PA - Other	7694	15758	-8064	11889
PA - Program Information	1404	11195	-9791	2574
Panhandling - Aggressive	137	254	-117	169
Panhandling - Passive	58	227	-169	91
Request for Fire/EMS	29	12	17	39
Request for Police	12	19	-7	13
Safety Escort	385	2814	-2429	1946
Sidewalk Violation	438	1309	-871	831
Suspicious Package	3	198	-195	3
Suspicious Person	63	463	-400	85
Trash (Bags collected)	221	0	221	473
Umbrella Escorts	23	343	-320	24
Total Contacts Oct. 2015	19252	56269	-37017	32472
Total Contacts Oct. 2014				
Total Variance (2014 v. 2015)				
Total Contacts YTD				



Comparison of total statistics recorded in October ranging from 2013 through 2015.

The Ambassador team finished October 2015 with 19,252 contacts for the month. We were down significantly from the same period the year before. During this time we experienced the loss of 3 staff, 2 of which were unexpected and we spent the month filling those positions and training new employees.

We continue to work with new staff on data collection and using the SMARTSystem to help bring them up to speed with recording their daily contacts. We also continue making the necessary preparations to expand the existing team's scope of services to include cleaning services as well.