



## Alliance for Livability

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

February 23, 2015

11:00am – 12:30pm

29 Pearl Street, NW Suite #1

### Agenda

***Main work item: Identify 3-5 priority areas to move forward in the budget process that will lead to concept and project prioritization in March and April.***

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment – Current Business – 3 minutes per person
3. Consent agenda items (Downtown Ambassador reports, January meeting minutes) – 1 minute – ***action required***
4. Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Concepts Discussion (full Alliance)– 45 minutes
5. Meeting Feedback Surveys – 2 minutes
6. Public Comment – Old/Other Business – 3 minutes per person
7. Adjourn



DOWNTOWN  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

## Alliance for Livability

January 26, 2015

1. Call to order- Wells called the meeting to order at 11:05am
2. Members Present: Shaun Biel, Trevor Bosworth, Asante Cain, Robert Dean, Joe Elliott, Steve Faber, Tyler Nickerson, Kate O'Keefe (Jay Schrimpf), Marcia Rapp, Jenn Schaub, Lynee Wells  
  
Members Absent: Kim Dabbs, Dr. Nkechy Ezech, Dr. Wendy Falb, Christian Frank, John Helmholdt, James Hurt, Chris Muller, Nate Phelps  
  
Others Present: Tim Kelly, Ernie Stafford, Melvin Eledge, Kim Van Driel, Mandy Cech, Murphy Ackerman, Matt Koning, Johanna Jelks, Bill Kirk, Kate O'Keefe, Andy Guy, Eric Pratt
3. Approval of November Minutes-  
*Motion: Marcia Rapp supported by Tyler Nickerson, moved approval of the November 24, 2014 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.*
4. Public Comment – Current Business-  
None
5. Discussion/question on written updates-  
Kirk reminded the Alliance that Valentine's will kick off its second year on February 13<sup>th</sup> with 80's on Ice. Kirk added that there will be over twenty-five (25) sculptures throughout Downtown, each sponsored by different businesses and organizations. Van Driel also encouraged anyone who was interested, to sign up for the upcoming broomball tournament being held at Rosa Parks Circle.
6. GR Forward Update-  
Kelly presented the GR Forward goals and strategies that have been developed through the planning process. Kelly explained that this is still a working vision statement and would encourage the group to think of any ideas or goals that may have been overlooked.

Wells asked how GRPS is fitting into the plan, as it is not mentioned in the goals and strategies. Kelly responded that the GRPS portion of the project is on a different timeline as opposed to the larger plan. The Central Campus planning project is slightly behind the GR Forward plan but will be integrated as soon as it is complete. Schaub asked Kelly if there will be provisions to ensure that those who are currently living in the Downtown core will not be pushed out. Kelly responded that in the coming weeks, he will be hosting a specific focus group for the special services that are offered Downtown. Nickerson added that he would like to ensure that human capital is incorporated as opposed to only infrastructure projects. Kelly added that there are more details that will emerge and be clarified as the plan continues to evolve. Rapp asked how diversity and inclusion is being incorporated into the planning process. Kelly responded that he and the planning team have been in the neighborhoods and working with various diversity groups to ensure that all voices are heard and represented. Bosworth added that, in addition to the river, he would like to see other ideas become unique to the City of Grand Rapids, as opposed to simply copying what other cities have done. Nickerson asked if any of the goals are aimed to strictly work on the connections to near neighborhoods. Kirk asked Kelly if the response in the neighborhood meetings is similar to what is being heard from the Downtown stakeholders. Kelly explained that the response varies from neighborhood to neighborhood, but everyone is curious to see how this plan will affect them and their ability to get Downtown. Dean added that he was happy to see the interest in bike lanes, but was curious if there is push back from other people. Kelly said that while some are not happy with bike lanes, it's most important that they are being implemented properly, while some appear to have no purpose or direction. Kirk added that there appears to be more backlash from neighborhoods regarding bike lanes than Downtown stakeholders and sees an opportunity for a stronger education piece hand in hand with the actual implementation. Schaub asked if there was a way to provide a more comprehensive breakdown of the amenities that are already located in Downtown that could be used to draw people to the Downtown with an overview of what the city can offer them. Kelly added that there is an ongoing conversation with GR Current to collaborate on how to attract the talent and identify the spaces available. Wells thanked everyone for this conversation as it will be imperative as the next budget process begins.

7. Staff Updates-

Kirk gave an update on the Livability projects that currently are in process. Kirk explained that a lot of projects will kick off in the spring, as winter is not conducive to construction. Pratt explained that three (3) local design firms responded to the RFQ for various enhancement projects. Viridis Design was chosen and in the upcoming months will begin to develop a concept plan for a recommendation for funding. Pratt explained that these projects will include streetscape improvements as well as the beautification of the Commerce alley between Weston and Oakes. Kirk explained that the mural project locations have been finalized and the UICA is now working on securing the artists. The mobility working group located five (5) locations for bike repair station and will begin implementing as soon as the snow is melted. Eledge shared that the ambassadors will be building and piloting a junior ambassador program in the coming months. Eledge explained that there are not a lot of specifics at this time but is hoping to have different programs and activities focused to different age groups.

Eledge explained that the goal for the program would be to help give kids ownership of their city and cultivate interest in them for the Downtown. Dean explained that he would be interested in partnering with this program as more details arise. Kirk informed the Alliance that the budget is currently on track but there is room in a few line items should any other ideas for short term interventions arise. Wells encouraged everyone to think about how these dollars could be spent as the fiscal year ends June 30<sup>th</sup>.

8. New Alliance Membership-

Wells explained that there have been some seats vacated and there are new seats to fill on the Alliance. Wells introduced Johanna Jelks and Matt Koning, and explained that both are interested in participating. Jelks and Koning both introduced themselves and informed the Alliance why they are interested in joining the group.

9. February Meeting Preview Discussion-

Wells thanked everyone for their continued commitment to the Alliance and explained that moving forward she would like to ensure that each meeting is an effective use of everyone's time. Wells asked the Alliance to think about larger and more substantial projects now that some "low hanging fruit" projects have been completed. Kirk added that now that the Alliance has a better understanding of how the DDA functions and the Alliances roles in that process, he would like to engage in the budget conversation again. Schaub explained that she sees a challenge when the projects take longer to implement because of the various processes and approval bodies and would like a more clearly defined idea of what is being asked of the Alliances. Kirk expressed that he would like to build a budget that everyone feels confident in. Faber encouraged the Alliance to ensure that the budget is aligned with immediate priorities that emerge from the GR Forward process. Faber explained that it is the responsibility of the group to identify what the near term actionable projects are once the plan is completed. Kirk added that because of the timing of the release of the completed GR Forward plan, the Alliance may need to make adjustments to ensure that certain projects are included in the budget. Faber added that this Alliance is the best poised to encourage a discussion on how people identify with Downtown as their second neighborhood and would like to see the various line items begin to reflect those priorities. Wells encouraged any other ideas to be sent to her in the interim to ensure that they are included in the next month's conversations.

10. Meeting Feedback Surveys-

11. Public Comment – Old/Other Business-

None

12. Adjourn –

Wells adjourned the meeting at 12:35pm

Alliance for Livability  
Minutes-January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

Minutes taken by:  
Murphy Ackerman  
Administrative Assistant  
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.



# Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassador Monthly Report

January 2015



# Safety Highlights



Bill S., clipping a lock that was placed on the port-a-john on Division Ave.

## Accomplishments

Successfully worked with GRPD and Office of Special Events to unlock the port-a-john on Division Ave.

The safety ambassador team increased our safety escorts by 98 in January 2015 v. January 2014.

## QUICK VIEW

*Jan 01, 2015 -- Jan 31, 2015*

- 4** Request for Police
- 20** Request for Fire/EMS
- 42** Observation - Fighting
- 72** Suspicious Package
- 129** Sidewalk Violation (skateboarding/Bicycling/Rollerblading)
- 357** Safety Escort
- 356** Suspicious Person



# Hospitality Highlights



Emily F., standing at the DGRI/Ambassador booth at the RV and Outdoor Show

## Special Recognition

Veronica, Melvin and Eryn all received positive feedback for providing excellent customer service.

## Partnerships

In January the ambassador team began providing a presence at several Showspan conventions at De Vos place. The partnership has been a big success for the ambassador team as we have been able to capture high numbers of contacts with pedestrians inside of the show.

## QUICK VIEW

*Jan 01, 2015 -- Jan 31, 2015*

- 1** Segway Hours
- 1** Umbrella Escorts
- 3** Motorist Assistance
- 95** Graffiti - Removed
- 390** Business Contact
- 1426** PA - Directions
- 2985** PA - Information
- 5098** PA - Other



# Outreach Highlights



Bill S., attending the Point in Time Count Briefing

## Partnerships

The ambassador program partnered with the coalition to end homelessness and several other agencies while taking part in the annual Point In Time (P.I.T.) Count. The ambassador team provided valuable insight as to where camps and known sleeping areas were located during the planning phase.

During the actual P.I.T. Count the ambassadors were asked to lead two separate teams throughout the Downtown assisting in the counting of homeless individuals.

The ambassador program also provided a tour of the homeless camps to Americorps Members who are looking to provide housing assessments and outreach to homeless individuals, especially youth.

## Field Observations

The ambassador team observed 168 instances of panhandling in January 2015 v. just 61 in January 2014.

## QUICK VIEW

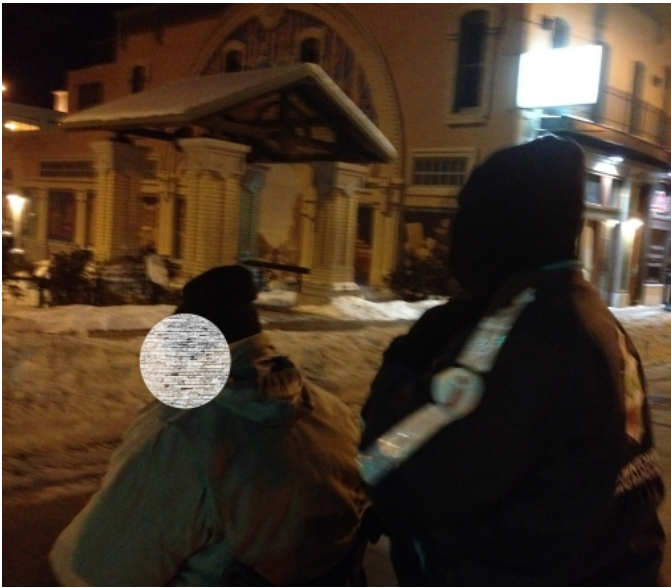
*Jan 01, 2015 -- Jan 31, 2015*

**61** Panhandling - Passive

**107** Panhandling - Aggressive

**3072** Homeless

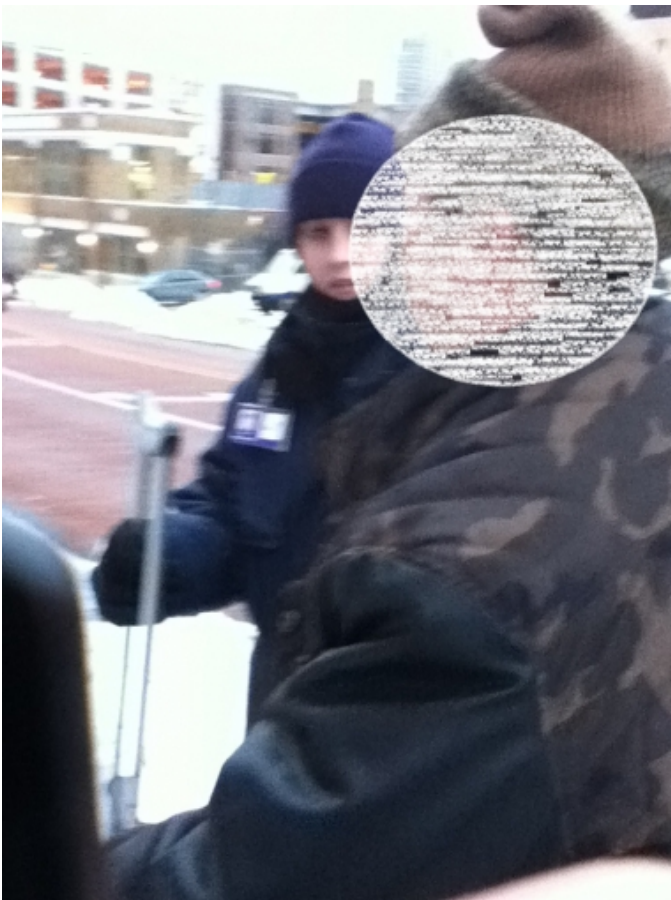
# Highlights



An Ambassador provides a safety escort to a man in a wheelchair



Darryl C., provides an escort to the PIC



Eryn F., provides an escort to the PIC.



Bill S., provides a tour of Downtown Homeless camps to an Americorps Volunteer.





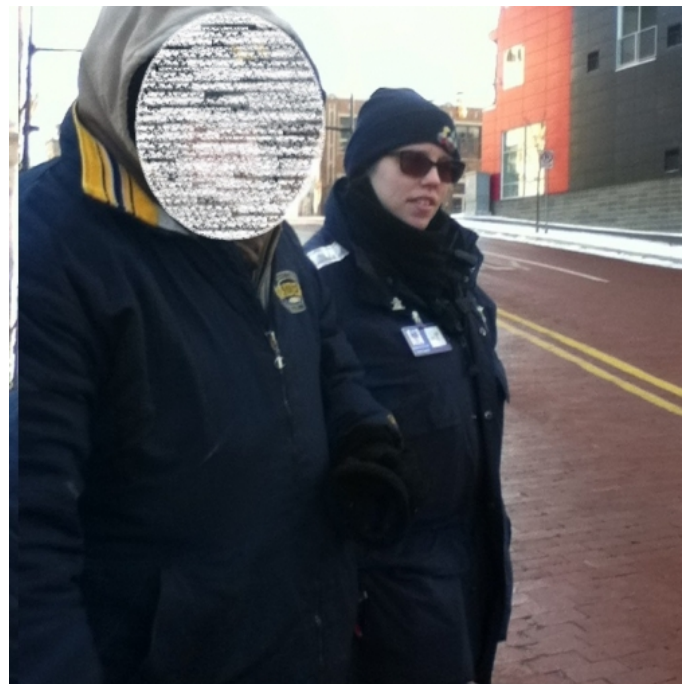
Graffiti on a map before...



... Map After



Bill S., finds abandoned belongings along side a building.



Rebecca K., provides an escort to the PIC.

# Statistics

Activity	Jan-15	Jan-14	Variance	YTD TOTAL
Business Contact	390	159	231	1920
Motorist Assistance	3	3	0	75
Umbrella Escorts	1	99	(98)	527
Bicycle (miles)	0	0	0	230
Panhandling - Aggressive	107	14	93	685
Panhandling - Passive	61	47	14	642
Graffiti - Removed	95	4	91	606
Request for Fire/EMS	20	14	6	55
Request for Police	4	4	0	43
Sidewalk Violation	129	104	25	2858
Segway Hours	1	0	1	95.42
Safety Escort	357	259	98	6316
PA - Information	2985	1228	1757	29328
PA - Directions	1426	775	651	17172
PA - Other	5098	1811	3287	45524
PA - Program Information	2035	1003	1032	21497
Homeless	3072	1794	1278	15457
Suspicious Package	72	7	65	499
Suspicious Person	356	37	319	1753
Observation - Fighting	42	2	40	116
<b>Total Contacts January 2015</b>	<b>58087</b>			
<b>Total Contacts January 2014</b>		<b>7364</b>	<b>50723</b>	<b>145073</b>
<b>Monthly Variance 2014 v. 2015</b>				
<b>Total Contacts YTD</b>				

Fig. 1 Statistics totals and comparisons for Jan. 2015

## Contacts by Category January 2015

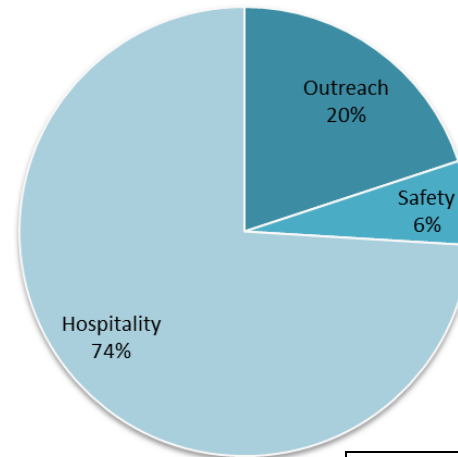


Fig. 2 Statistical Break down by percentage of interactions for January 2015

## Monthly Contacts Comparison

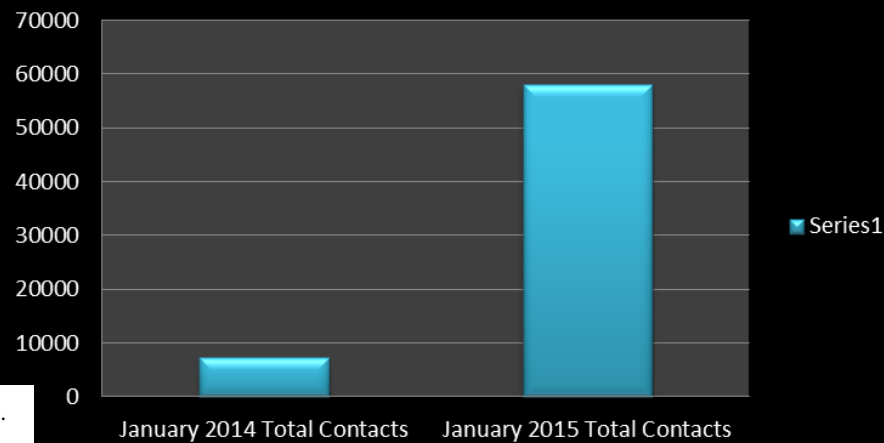


Fig. 3 Comparison of Contacts Jan. 2014 v. Jan. 2015



## Fiscal Year 2016 – Budget Concepts

Members provided feedback during January’s Alliance for Livability meeting, related to both the GRFWD draft Vision and Goals, and on the general budget process for the coming fiscal year. High level concepts included:

- Deliberate, intentional focus on current residents, especially those that may be under-housed
- Constant emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Maximization and utilization of assets that are “uniquely Grand Rapids”, especially cultural amenities
- Higher prioritization placed on “human capital” and the “people component” of both the GRFWD plan and the Alliance for Livability’s actions
- Alignment of Alliance priorities and actions with GRFWD strategies and recommendations

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As the Alliance for Livability begins the Budget Prioritization Process for FY 2016, the following key questions should be considered:

- How can investments and actions by the Alliance for Livability bridge the gap between citizens’ 1<sup>st</sup> (home) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Downtown) neighborhood?
- What are 3 to 5 larger-scale projects that the Alliance for Livability can prioritize that fit within the focus areas of the Alliance: Beautification, Cleanliness and Safety, Mobility, and Urban Recreation? *(keep in mind that forthcoming GRFWD recommendations will impact these projects)*
- How can the Alliance for Livability’s FY 2016 budget reflect a desire to invest in the human capital necessary to create a livable Downtown (not just infrastructure, bricks, and mortar)?

*Example project ideas:*

- *Signature public art projects*
- *Downtown bikeshare*
- *Signature park improvements (dog park, skatepark)*
- *Bridge beautification/enhancement*
- *Wayfinding as public art*
- *Enhanced Downtown transit infrastructure*
- *Arena/Ionia alley beautification*
- *DASH rebranding*
- *Residential Council financial support*
- *Physical location for public feedback*
- *Etc.*



## Budget Process Timeline

- February – budget concepts discussion
- March – project prioritization
- April – cost estimation / project refinement
- May – Alliance for Livability FY 2016 budget recommendation to

Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors

## Alliance for Livability – February 24, 2014 Meeting Recap

The following document provides a summary/capture of the discussion from the last Alliance for Livability meeting. Section 1 represents all notes taken and ideas captured from the discussion, organized from high level concepts to specific ideas and outcomes. The end of Section 1 provides a **draft** mission statement developed from common themes in the discussion and notes. Section 2 first categorizes projects and commitments in the current fiscal year into the five focus areas of the Alliance, then breaks out the concepts, ideas, and outcomes from February's meeting into the same five focus areas. The bulleted sections following the tables attempt to categorize items that don't fit neatly into one of the focus areas. The end of the section lists questions for the Alliance and staff to examine based on the discussion from the meeting.

### ***Section 1***

#### High-Level/Aspirational

- Opportunities for business, education, income, and general community growth
- Embracing our diversity and strengths to define and develop the current and future personality of Grand Rapids
- Diversity of residents and visitors as a core value
- “We need to get extravagant” – shed the need to be frugal all the time
- Embrace the positives and successes of other communities, break out of our typical insularity
- Seek opportunities for partnerships with like-minded organizations, create leverage and mutual success
- Diversity in income and housing stock
- “Complete neighborhoods”
- Leverage AFL/DGRI for external development and investment

#### Mid-Level/Goals-Outcomes

- A downtown that serves all ages (pre-k to seniors), “full complement of services”
- The need to leave downtown is minimal – ease of access to amenities
- Improved feedback mechanisms, clear methods for identifying problems and problem areas
- Better opportunities for involvement and volunteer activities – “make it simple to get involved”



- Make downtown more welcoming to all races, cultures, etc.
- Utilize the arts to build cultural bridges
- Support the residents council
- Better engagement of the student population – “support the student voice”
- Full seasonal beautification
- Ample recreation opportunities and spaces
- Balance of attractions and amenities for residents and visitors
- Beautiful public spaces
- Make non-auto travel modes the most appealing choices
- “Great streets” – better paths for non-auto travel
- Define “accessibility” – all the way from retail pricing to physical infrastructure
- Understand perception vs. reality of “clean, safe, welcoming”

#### Actions/Tactics

- Examination of policy barriers to a more livable downtown
- Create better communication channels and opportunities at all levels (volunteering, events, amenities, feedback, etc.)
- Explore partnerships and cross-promotion opportunities with other Michigan communities
- Enhance way-finding to better connect districts – explore ways to emphasize unique districts (Heartside, Arena District, Monroe North, etc.)
- Enhance the public right of way with better sidewalks, lighting, etc.
- Identify opportunities for industrial design improvements
- Identify opportunities for public art
- Create more bi-lingual amenities at all levels

#### Specific Outcomes

- Less surface parking
- Better DASH signage
- Enhance transit stops and public spaces with art

- Potential downtown mural project
- Digital mobility app
- Potential for public art funding stream
- Create a sub-committee for student input

Potential Mission:

The Alliance for Livability works in an open and deliberate manner to make Downtown Grand Rapids a place that is accessible and serves people of all ages, cultures, ethnicities, genders, and abilities. It provides unique opportunities and amenities for everyone to live, work, and play. The Alliance for Livability works to make Downtown a safe, beautiful, creative, and loved neighborhood by all who know it.

## Section 2

### Current Year/Committed Projects

	Alliance	For	Livability	
<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Beautification</i>	<i>Clean &amp; Safe</i>	<i>Mobility</i>	<i>Urban Recreation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project and Fixed Asset Maintenance</li> <li>• Riverwalk Maintenance</li> <li>• Street Trees Maintenance</li> <li>• Snowmelt System</li> <li>• Winter Avenue Building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility - Streetscape repairs</li> <li>• Gateway Signage</li> <li>• Riverwalk Wayfinding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division Avenue Task Force Implementation</li> <li>• Safety Ambassador Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Demand Management</li> <li>• Bicycle Friendly Improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban Recreation Plan</li> </ul>

Additional Items:

- Stakeholder Engagement Programs
- River Edge – South of Fulton to 131

## Potential Project Areas from February Alliance for Livability Meeting

	Alliance	For	Livability	
Asset Management	Beautification	Clean & Safe	Mobility	Urban Recreation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize the arts to build cultural bridges</li> <li>Full seasonal beautification</li> <li>Beautiful public spaces</li> <li>Identify opportunities for public art</li> <li>Enhance transit stops and public spaces with art</li> <li>Potential downtown mural project</li> <li>Potential for a public art funding stream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the public right-of-way with better sidewalks, lighting, etc. <i>(this overlaps w/ both beautification and mobility)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make non-auto travel modes the most appealing choices</li> <li>Enhance way-finding to better connect districts – explore ways to emphasize unique districts</li> <li>Less surface parking</li> <li>Better DASH signage</li> <li>Digital mobility application</li> <li>“Great Streets” – better paths for non-auto travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ample recreation opportunities and space</li> </ul>

### Potential Goals for all Alliances/DGRI:

- Opportunities for business, education, income, and general community growth; Embracing our diversity and strengths to define and develop the current and future personality of Grand Rapids; Embrace the positives and successes of other communities, break out of our typical insularity; “Complete Neighborhoods”; Leverage Alliances and DGRI for external development and investment

### “Engagement” items:

- High-Level/Aspirational: Seek opportunities for partnership with like-minded organizations – create and leverage mutual success

- Mid-Level/Goals-Outcomes: Improved feedback mechanisms, clear methods of identifying problems and problem areas; better opportunities for involvement and volunteer activities – “make it simple to get involved”; Support the Residents Council; Better engagement of the student population – “support the student voice”
- Actions/Tactics: Create better communication channels and opportunities at all levels (volunteering, events, amenities, feedback, etc.); Explore partnerships and cross-promotion opportunities with other Michigan communities
- Specific Outcomes: Create a sub-committee for student input

“Access/Inclusion” items:

- High-Level/Aspirational: Diversity of residents and visitors as a core value; Diversity in income and housing stock;
- Mid-Level/Goals-Outcomes: A downtown that serves all ages (pre-K to seniors) –full complement of services; The need to leave downtown is minimal – ease of access to amenities; Make downtown more welcoming to all races, cultures, etc.; Balance of attractions and amenities for residents and visitors
- Actions/Tactics: Create more bi-lingual amenities at all levels

Questions:

- Mid-Level/Goals-Outcomes: Define “accessibility” – from retail pricing to physical infrastructure and everything in between; Understand perception vs. reality of “clean, safe, welcoming”
- Actions/Tactics: Examination of policy barriers to a more livable downtown; Identify opportunities for industrial design improvements