

# AGENDA



## DGRI BOARD OF ADVISORS

### Members:

Stephanie Andrews • Monica App • Rick Baker • Shaun Biel • Charles Burke • Jorge Gonzalez • Brian Harris • Mayor David LaGrand • Nikos Monoyios • Doug Small • Eddie Tadlock • Randy Thelen • Al Vanderberg • Mark Washington • Kara Wood • Rick Winn

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January 15, 2026 2:00p  
29 Pearl Street NW (DGRI Offices)

- |   |        |        |
|---|--------|--------|
| 1. Call to Order (2:00)                                       |        | Harris |
| 2. Approval of December 11, 2025 Minutes (2:01)<br>(enclosed) | Motion | Harris |
| 3. Grand River Greenway Investment Recommendations (2:05)     | Motion | Guy    |
| 4. Grand River Network Agreement (2:15)<br>(enclosed)         | Motion | Kelly  |
| 5. GR Forward 2.0 (2:20)<br>(enclosed)                        | Info   | Kelly  |
| 6. President & CEO Report (2:30)                              | Info   | Kelly  |
| 7. Board Member Discussion (2:35)                             | Info   | Board  |
| 8. Public Comment (2:40)                                      |        |        |
| 9. Adjournment (2:45)   |        |        |



Board of Advisors Meeting  
December 11, 2025

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:01 pm by Chair Brian Harris

Attendance:

Members Present: Stephanie Andrews, Rick Baker, Shaun Biel, Jorge Gonzalez, Brian Harris, Nikos Monoyios, Doug Small, Monica Steimle-App, Randy Thelen (arrived after agenda item #2), Al Vanderberg, Kara Wood, City Manager Mark Washington (arrived after agenda item #3), Rick Winn (arrived after agenda item #2).

Members Absent: Charles Burke. Mayor David LaGrand, and Eddie Tadlock,

Others Present: Tim Kelly (President & CEO), Jessica Wood (Legal Counsel), Steve Glista (Legal Counsel), Kadi Smith and Allie Lewis (Recording Secretary), Megan Catcho, Andy Guy, Mark Miller, Kim Van Driel, and Catherine Zietse (DGRI Staff)

2. Approve of Meeting Minutes

*Motion: Member Steimle-App, supported by Member Wood, moved to approve meeting minutes from September 18, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.*

3. 2026 Meeting Schedule

*Motion: Member Vanderberg, supported by Member Biel, moved to approve the 2026 Meeting Schedule. The motion carried unanimously.*

4. GR Forward 2.0 Consultant and Steering Committee

Miller provided an update on the GR Forward consultant recommendation. Following virtual interviews with three teams on November 21, the review committee unanimously selected Interface Studio as the preferred consultant. The decision was based on Interface Studio's strong knowledge of Downtown Grand Rapids, flexible engagement approach, stakeholder focus, and proven experience. DGRI has begun scope and fee discussions with Interface Studio, with details expected to be finalized by the end of the year. Project work is anticipated to begin in early 2026.

Miller also outlined plans to form a steering committee of 15 to 20 members to guide the project's overall direction. Board members were invited to suggest candidates or express interest in participating. The committee will include representatives from various agencies and will ensure transparent and diverse input throughout the process.

Member Baker asked how often the steering committee would meet. Miller responded, meetings are expected to occur monthly once the project begins, with a mix of virtual and in-person formats anticipated.

Member Baker and Chair Harris asked about the criteria, representation, and primary objectives of the steering committee, including the perspectives sought, member responsibilities, and what “steering” the project entails. Miller explained that the committee’s purpose is to provide broad and transparent review of ideas as the plans evolve, ensuring diverse representation and preventing decisions from being concentrated within DGRI staff.

Kelly added that additional engagement opportunities are being developed beyond the steering committee, including sessions with all boards and group discussions involving business leaders, residents, and other local stakeholders. These efforts will allow broader participation and input throughout the project, while the steering committee remains actively involved alongside these initiatives.

Chair Harris inquired about the timing of the first meeting and whether city and county representatives have been invited to participate. Miller confirmed that the initial touchpoint is anticipated in February. City Manager Washington added that a city representative will indeed need to be involved.

Kelly highlighted a distinctive element of Interface Studio's proposal: the inclusion of a business plan and organizational framework, which was not part of the original effort. This addition will be valuable in clarifying priorities and goals for downtown and understanding their implications for DGRI as an organization.

Miller emphasized that as the process moves forward, board members are encouraged to share questions or ideas related to areas such as retail, commercial development, or mobility. All these topics will be open for discussion as the update progresses.

### 5. 1615 Monroe Avenue Request

Guy reported on progress toward organizing the sale of a portion of the property at 1615 Monroe Avenue NW to support construction of the riverfront trail connecting Leonard and Ann Streets north of Downtown. Since the initial discussion, the City Commission has approved the purchase agreement and authorized the Mayor and City staff to accept the deed, make payment to DGRI, and complete the acquisition of the trail property. The Commission also approved the related budget expenditure.

City and DGRI staff are now finalizing supporting documentation, with the next major step being to proceed to closing. Preparations include filing a land division application to legally separate the property. The goal is to secure a closing date by the end of the year, pending lender agreement on terms, which appears favorable. Plans also include preparing an RFQ over the winter for future development, with an initial three-year term and an option for two additional years with lenders. Glista confirmed that the assessor's office is satisfied with the property dimensions, noting that the site will serve as a permanent trail. Staff remain optimistic that all documentation will be ready for closing by year-end.

Chair Harris raised concerns about the timeline and potential impacts on the Greenway construction schedule.

Harris also inquired about the financial implications; specifically how much would remain to be paid within the two-year period. Guy clarified that the agreement carries 0% interest and includes an option to extend if necessary. He further addressed questions about revenue, noting the importance of understanding the gap between income from tenants and breaking even. Current tenants are on month-to-month leases, providing flexibility as plans progress.

Winn reported that the original principal allowance was \$1.9 million, with current proceeds totaling \$108,000. Of that amount, 80% will be allocated back to lenders, while DGRI will retain the remaining 20%.

Biel emphasized that the primary goal is to facilitate the trail project and confirmed that progress is aligned with the original plan. Biel added that if a formal motion is required to advance this transaction, he would be prepared to make that motion.

*Motion: Member Biel supported by Member Vanderberg to Approve the attached resolution, authorizing the President/CEO to:*

- 1. Execute a purchase and sale agreement with the City,*
- 2. File an application for land division, legally separating the 'trail real estate' from the parent property,*
- 3. Accept funds from closing and settle financial obligations related to the sale of the property, and*
- 4. Execute the deed and any other necessary documentation to complete the transaction on behalf of DGRI.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

6. Grand River Greenway Update and Request

Zietse provided an update on current and upcoming Greenway grant-funded projects along the corridor, including:

- Knapp Street Bridge over the Grand River – Bids received on November 20; construction anticipated to begin February 2026.
- White Pine to Ada Trail Build – Project includes three phases; one phase is bid, with two additional phases expected to bid in January/February.
- Ann to Leonard Street Trail Build (Upland) – Anticipated bidding in December (northern segment) and January/February (southern segment).
- Grand Rapids Public Museum Trail & River Access – Currently under construction and near completion.
- Fulton to Wealthy Trail & River Access (East Riverfront) – Currently under construction.
- Oxford Trail Rehabilitation & Extension – Currently under construction.
- Johnson Park Natural Surface Trails – Currently under construction.
- Indian Mounds Drive Rehabilitation Planning – Planning is underway.
- Greenway Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Plan for Action – Ongoing work.

Zietse also shared a draft inventory of priority projects within the lower urban core, noting that this is an important time to identify next steps, determine priorities, and consider fundraising opportunities

for projects beyond the 2026 ARPA spend. A continued priority remains completing the Greenway backbone connection particularly as it relates to the East Riverfront between Fulton and Wealthy.

Member Vanderberg highlighted an example of the impressive regional connections being achieved, noting the stretch from Oxford to Ann and credited the City of Grand Rapids for its leadership in advancing these efforts and emphasized the importance of understanding the final steps in the process.

Member Monoyios asked whether funding sources for all the projects have been identified. Zietse responded that funding has not yet been finalized, although multiple options have been explored. Member Wood commended the significant progress achieved in a short period and asked what risks, aside from weather, could prevent funds from being spent. Zietse explained that weather and flooding remain the primary risks but that the team remains confident in our ability to complete everything on time.

Chair Harris noted that the O&M exercise is expected to come to a head in January and emphasized that it will require significant collaboration. He expressed optimism and anticipated an update in the new year.

7. MLCC Resolution Approval

Catcho provided a review of last year's data and outlined expectations for this year's World of Winter festival. She explained that DGRI became a 501(c)(3) organization in July 2022, enabling it to apply for up to 12 MLCC Special Licenses annually for events. In 2025, licenses were approved for Silent Disco during World of Winter and for ArtPrize. For 2026, Catcho is seeking approval for another Silent Disco license in partnership with Alliance Beverage. If approved, the resolution and application will be submitted to MLCC, and event data will be reported to the Board at a later date.

Chair Harris asked whether there is a revenue capture mechanism for the World of Winter festival or if it is funded solely through the DDA. Kelly explained that the festival is primarily underwritten by the DDA, supplemented by sponsorships and some revenue generated through creative events. Catcho added that this year's revenue will also include merchandise sales. Member Winn expressed his support for the continued growth of the festival.

*Motion: Member Winn, supported by Member Andrews, moved to Approve the resolution authorizing the submittal of the Special License Application to the MLCC.*

8. Art Prize MOU

Kelly explained that Goal 5 of GR Forward emphasizes expanding arts and cultural events to activate Downtown year-round. When ArtPrize ceased operations in 2022, DGRI partnered with Ferris State University and the City of Grand Rapids through an MOU effective January 2023 and amended in June 2024. This partnership successfully delivered three ArtPrize events, the most recent concluding on October 4, 2025.

The current MOU is set to expire on December 31, 2025. The partners propose extending the agreement through June 30, 2027 to allow time for completing a strategic plan and hosting ArtPrize

2026, with the goal of establishing a new entity by 2027. All other terms of the agreement remain unchanged. The revised MOU is scheduled for City Commission approval on December 16, 2025.

Chair Harris confirmed that the proposed extension is for 18 months. Kelly reiterated that the MOU extension is for an 18-month period, with the option to extend further if needed.

*Motion: Member Andrews, supported by Member Steimle-App, to Authorize the President and CEO to execute an extension of the MOU with the ArtPrize 2.0 Partners.*

9. Grand River Greenway Art Plan

Van Driel provided some background on the priorities of the plan that were developed based on steering committee input and public engagement.

City Manager Washington raised a question about financial sustainability and Van Driel discussed various options in the plan and potential solutions that will be considered for future revenue and organizational management.

Chair Harris, City Manager Washington, and Member Vanderberg raised questions about the scope and boundaries of the plan. Van Driel credited member Vanderberg with helping broaden the outlook, and City Manager Washington noted the city's contribution to expanding the plan. Harris added that both the City and County are engaged in supporting a more integrated approach.

Members Baker and Andrews raised questions about potential funding sources and their potential costs and benefits. Kelly added that existing city ordinances and examples from other communities could provide guidance for managing such challenges.

Member Andrews suggested exploring the potential of an art endowment campaign. Harris stated that DGRI will form a committee to initiate this work, which could eventually be housed by GRN or transferred to another organization, emphasizing that DGRI must take the lead in the absence of an appropriate entity to currently manage the work. Kelly noted that the project plan is still in draft form, will be refined further, and will return to the Board for approval at a later date. Member Wood expressed concerns about the draft plan, noting that additional feedback should be provided, particularly regarding input from developers and project funders.

10. President & CEO Report

Kelly gave the following updates:

- Thanked the DGRI team for their efforts, noting this was the fourth meeting in the past 40 hours.
- Introduced new DGRI Front Desk Coordinator, Allie Lewis.
- Bamboo ribbon cutting
- Santa Parade & Tree lighting were a success
- Ice skating at Rosa Parks Circle is now open
- Downtown Christkindl Market running through December 23rd
- World of Winter festival starts January 9<sup>th</sup>
- Tremendous work on the Soccer Stadium and Amphitheater, which went into contract with Rockford Construction

- The Greenway project is making significant progress
- Lyon Square ribbon cutting
- Whitewater is currently out to bid
- GR Forward accomplishments highlighted; a lot to be proud of and thankful for

11. Board Member Discussion

Member Baker expressed appreciation for the team's impressive work and the emphasis on maintenance efforts. He noted that much of the work occurs outside the physical boundaries and asked how board members should respond when questioned about what the team is doing locally. Kelly clarified that DGRI as an entity does not have boundaries, though the boards do. He explained that the Greenway initiative originated from the state with specific directives to work countywide, adding that the appropriate response depends on the nature of the question.

Counselor Wood acknowledged the existence of boundaries and noted that analyses are conducted to ensure activities are properly planned. Chair Harris agreed, stating that the question arises frequently and emphasized the need to avoid "creeping" beyond scope, while sometimes filling gaps when necessary. Member Vanderberg highlighted the extensive partnerships involved in the trail project, noting that stakeholders identified 350 projects that will come together over time.

Chair Harris concluded with a heartfelt message, expressing pride in the tremendous work accomplished by DGRI and gratitude for the staff and board's contributions. He commended the thoughtfulness and enthusiasm of board members and stated that 2026 promises to be an exciting year. Harris wished everyone a Happy Holiday's.

12. Public Comment

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 pm.

Minutes taken by:

Kadi Smith

Interim Recording Secretary



## MEMORANDUM

TO: DGRI Board of Advisors

FROM: Tim Kelly, AICP  
President & CEO

DATE: January 15, 2026

SUBJECT: **Item #4 – Extension of Agreement between DGRI and Grand River Network**

In September 2022 the DGRI Board of Advisors approved a Memorandum of Agreement with the Grand River Network (previously Grand River Inc.) which recommended the Network assume a leadership role organizing the Grand River Greenway grant investment strategy in Grand Rapids/Kent County. The initial term sheet is attached here.

The term of that initial Agreement has expired and staff is recommending extending it until 2027. This extension will allow for the continued staff support for the Network, additional strategic planning, and importantly to finalize expenditure of the remaining grant funds allocated to DGRI for the Grand River Greenway. No other changes are proposed to the MOA at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve an extension of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Grand River Network to June 30, 2027.



**Essential Elements and Terms  
For A Memorandum of Agreement  
Between Grand River Inc. and Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.**

**I. Purpose**

This agreement sets out the framework for a collaborative relationship between Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) and Grand River Inc. (GRI) to develop a *Priority Plan for Action* to guide Grand River Greenway investment in Grand Rapids and Kent County. Implementation of the vision for Grand River Corridor revitalization aims to meet all the following community-driven goals:

- Re-establish the Grand River corridor as a renewed social and economic asset.
- Expand safe public access to the Grand River.
- Rehabilitate and expand the riverfront park and greenspace system.
- Deliver equitable opportunity for all.
- Better connect the Grand River corridor to adjacent neighborhoods, communities and the regional non-motorized trail system.
- Promote public recreation and community health.
- Reinforce the Grand Rapids Whitewater initiative.

Towards these ends, the Parties propose to sign a Memorandum of Agreement to work together to *establish and execute a process* for identifying and evaluating parks and trails project priorities, identifying opportunities for integration of key relevant community plans and projects, determining a decision-making model and providing recommendations for funding allocations to support development of the Grand River Greenway. This includes establishing an informed technical advisory committee with relevant knowledge and skills to help guide the effort.

**II. Background**

- The greater Grand Rapids Community has worked since 2010 to develop a transformative vision for the revitalization of the Grand River corridor. This vision and related project opportunities is defined thru several community-based planning processes including, but not limited to, Green Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Whitewater Plan, Kent County Parks, Trails and Natural Areas Master Plan, GR Forward and River for All.
- Based largely on the power of and support for the community's vision, the Michigan Legislature and Governor Whitmer in March 2022 approved an infrastructure budget including a \$55,000,000 allocation to DGRI to support implementation of this vision for the Grand River Greenway.
- The state funding is intended to help leverage additional public, private and philanthropic investment to deliver an estimated \$175,000,000 in Greenway-related projects in Grand Rapids and Kent County.
- Based on the rules of the infrastructure funding, these projects must be obligated by December 2024 and completed by December 2026.
- DGRI, a Michigan nonprofit corporation, is the management entity responsible for city building and place management in the urban core of the City of Grand Rapids, MI.
- GRI, a Michigan nonprofit corporation, was established to help lead implementation and stewardship of the community's vision for a revitalized river corridor.
- DGRI desires to engage GRI for the purpose of developing a *Priority Plan for Action* to guide Grand River Greenway investment.

### III. General Role of Each Party

Both partners agree to perform their partnership responsibilities and decision-making guided by equity, accountability and transparency.

#### DGRI

- Was awarded \$55,000,000 toward development of the Grand River Greenway. Explicitly stated in State statute, funds will be used to support rehabilitating and expanding the riverfront greenway system in Grand Rapids/Kent County and building new nonmotorized recreational trail to fill the gaps in the riverfront trail system and complete regional connections.
- Will be responsible to the state of Michigan via grant agreement for allocating the funding for specific projects and complying with all state reporting requirements.
- Will work with the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County, GRI and other partners, including in the private sector, as needed to significantly augment state funding to reach an estimated goal of \$175,000,000 to meet priority capital project needs.
- Board may propose candidates to serve on a project technical advisory committee organized and managed by GRI for purposes of developing the *Priority Plan for Action*.
- Will grant GRI use of space for offices and operations during its organizational start-up including some administrative and other support.
- Maintains authority to make all final decisions related to the expenditure of the State-appropriated Greenway funding but will exercise that authority in the spirit of good faith cooperation with GRI.

#### GRI

- Holds the mission to establish and facilitate a network of community voices and collaborative teams working together to build a world-class *River for All*, which provides the foundation for its partnership with DGRI.
- Will develop and lead a process for defining a *Priority Plan for Action* to guide Grand River Greenway investment. This will include an inventory – comprehensive as practical – of all Greenway-related projects in Grand Rapids and Kent County, a decision-making model to determine capital priorities and recommendations for funding prioritization.
- Will develop a framework for a project technical advisory committee to support this work, including membership and operating guidelines.
- Will recruit committee members whose mission, interests and expertise connect to implementation of the transformative vision for the Grand River corridor.
- Commits to supporting the project technical advisory committee with staff or contract assistance.
- Board advances Greenway funding recommendations – based on project technical advisory committee findings – to DGRI Board of Advisors.
- Will work with the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County, DGRI and other partners, including in the private sector, as needed to significantly augment state funding to reach an estimated goal of \$175,000,000 to meet priority capital project needs.
- Will work with DGRI, the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County and river stakeholders to explore, develop and recommend stewardship strategies for operating and maintaining public river corridor parks, trails, in channel improvements and related public assets to assure high quality operations and maintenance of the facilities for public use.

#### *Greenway Project Technical Advisory Committee*

- Advisory body of 9 – 15 members organized to develop a *Priority Plan for Action* to guide Grand River Greenway investment.
- The Committee, with GRI, consultant and partner support, will oversee project discovery, develop funding criteria, review project priorities and make investment recommendations to the Grand River Inc. Board.
- Operates within the framework and goals approved by GRI and DGRI.
- Operates openly and transparently.
- Reports to GRI and provides regular updates to DGRI.

#### **IV. Communications, External and Internal**

- The Parties will determine the preferred internal communication strategy, including collaborative efforts with the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County and relevant partners.
- The Parties will determine the preferred external communications strategy, including potentially social media, website(s) and public outreach.
- DGRI and GRI will work together to be accountable to the community through such things as project updates, meetings and other communication.
- GRI's Greenway Project Technical Advisory Committee will meet regularly and keep meeting minutes and records of their review and recommendations.

#### **V. Cooperation, Collaboration and Community Connections**

- DGRI and GRI both recognize that their mutual cooperation and collaboration – along with a multitude of other community partners and stakeholders – is essential to successfully implement the vision for the Grand River Greenway.
- Both parties further recognize that extensive community engagement to date has informed the vision for Grand River corridor revitalization, and ongoing two-way communications and outreach remains an essential element of Greenway implementation efforts.
- DGRI agrees to include GRI in planning efforts related to the Grand River corridor.
- DGRI also agrees to promote coordination and collaboration among the Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority, the Monroe North Tax Increment Finance Authority and DGRI Board of Advisors membership.

#### **VI. Term of Agreement**

- Agreement expires January 2025, at which point GRI and DGRI may evaluate purpose, outcomes and extension.

#### **VII. Anticipating Evolving Roles and Responsibilities**

- The Parties will convene following the initial Greenway project discovery and evaluation process to further clarify roles, responsibilities and other issues that might emerge thru gaining a deeper understanding of what Greenway implementation requires. Items for further discussion could include but certainly not limited to:
  - Clearly defining leadership and partnership(s) – including in the public, private and philanthropic sectors – necessary to drive execution of priority projects
  - Funding gaps and collaborative strategy to raise needed amounts for specific priority projects

- Levels of performance and execution contingent to providing funding
- Developing and advancing a stewardship framework to support sustainable operations and maintenance of Greenway assets

#### **VIII. Dispute Resolution and Exit Strategy**

If unanticipated issues arise with respect to this proposed Agreement or their relationship, DGRI and GRI agree to promptly in good faith discuss them and seek resolution.



## MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 15, 2026

TO: DGRI Board of Advisors

FROM: Tim Kelly, AICP  
President & CEO

SUBJECT: Item #5 - GR Forward Process Update

Considering the significant progress made to implement the 2015 GR Forward Downtown Plan's recommendations over the last decade, DGRI is undertaking a plan update. The intent of this update is focused on revisiting the existing Plan's principles and strategies with a focus on understanding current trends/headwinds and supporting continued implementation and success in the next 10 years to continue to build a welcoming and prosperous urban core.

In December following a Request for Qualifications process, a selection committee recommended a team lead by Interface Studios to complete the update. DGRI has initiated a scope and fee discussion with Interface and will continue that discussion and refinement in the coming weeks. A preliminary draft scope from Interface is attached. It is anticipated that the final scope and fee will be negotiated by the end of the month and that Interface and team will begin work on the project in February 2026.

## **GR FORWARD PLAN UPDATE SCOPE OF WORK**

### **TASK 1 – PROJECT KICKOFF & MANAGEMENT**

#### **1.1 Project Kick-Off**

Interface Studio will facilitate a project kick-off meeting to establish the roles of all team members, clarify the project purpose and goals, define project milestones, and set a project schedule.

#### **1.2 Project Coordination**

Interface Studio will facilitate biweekly coordination calls with the internal team to check in on the schedule, milestones, and any upcoming deliverables or public events. Interface will create a file sharing system for the internal team members.

#### **1.3 Collection of Base Information**

At the outset of the project, Interface Studio will prepare a collective data request for the necessary files and documents pertaining to the study area from DGRI. This initial review of base information will help the team identify gaps in necessary data and enable us to plan accordingly for data collection or follow up requests as needed. In addition, we will thoroughly review past planning efforts and identify the strategies, successes, and barriers toward implementation that will serve as a strong foundation for the development of this plan.

#### **1.4 Kick-off Trip**

- Early meeting with Staff & Stakeholders
- Study Area Tour
- Project goals and early engagement strategies
- GR Forward Debrief
  - Interface Studio will plan a session with DGRI to get an understanding about what has worked with the GR Forward Plan, what hasn't, understand why, and learn how a new/updated document will be most useful for their team going forward.

### **TASK 2 – COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

#### **2.1 Community Engagement Plan**

The GR Forward update requires a fundamentally different engagement approach than the original 2015 plan. Where the first plan asked people to believe in possibility through comprehensive engagement, this update builds on success through strategic, focused engagement. The world has changed, a new generation has moved downtown, and expectations around transparency have evolved dramatically.

Working collaboratively with DGRI, our team will design a tailored engagement strategy that recognizes these shifts while honoring what made GR Forward successful. The engagement plan will:

**Define and Target Multiple Audiences with Distinct Approaches:**

- Original stakeholders need validation
- New downtown residents need context and a call-to-action
- Adjacent BIDs and neighborhood groups need coordination and connection
- Strategic partners need choreographed investment alignment

**Create Multiple On-Ramps for Participation:** Not everyone engages the same way. Our strategy will provide diverse entry points—from intimate stakeholder conversations to pop-up events, from digital surveys to celebratory gatherings—meeting people where they actually are, not where we wish they were.

**Build in Flexibility and Responsiveness:** We'll establish clear milestones and evaluation points, allowing us to adjust tactics as we learn what resonates. The engagement calendar will align with project phases, seasonal opportunities (including winter programming), and DGRI's existing infrastructure and events.

## **2.2 Storytelling Framework & Narrative Development**

This is where engagement transforms into inspiration. Before we can ask people what they want for downtown's future, we need to ensure they understand downtown's transformation story. Many new residents inherited what you built but don't know how it came to be. Many original stakeholders deserve to see their impact celebrated. Our goal is to communicate and educate around what's been done and that there's still work to do.

- Develop core narrative architecture: Then (2015) → Wow! (Today) → Let's Get Bolder (Future)
- Develop educational content explaining:
  - What has changed and why it matters
  - How GR Forward recommendations were implemented (80-90% completion story)
  - DGRI's tools, role, and achievements (Lyon Square, public spaces, etc.)
  - What's still needed and what's possible next

## **2.3 Marketing Materials and Branding**

We will work collaboratively with DGRI and partners to ensure that the graphics and personality of the plan hit the right notes. The Interface Studio team will develop marketing materials that align with the branding for online and print. Materials may include a logo, postcards, posters, flyers, t-shirts, and other materials for press releases and the website that will communicate clear and easily identifiable messages about the Plan.

### Communications Materials Development:

- Visual transformation story (before/after content)
- "How Downtown Works" educational graphics
- Implementation success stories highlighting completed projects
- Digital and print collateral for multiple touchpoints

## **2.4 Steering Committee**

We will work with DGRI to create and convene a Steering Committee of community stakeholders, including residents, property owners, business owners, neighborhood associations and more, to help guide the process. Together with the Steering Committee we will establish the processes and timelines for the plan, provide data and respond to questions, and ensure we have the leadership and agency representatives support of the plan's development and direction at every step. The committee is critical to help us gain insight into the community and best methods for reaching out to the community. We will engage this group to test ideas, ask for evaluation of our analysis and recommendations as experts in their respective interest groups. We expect 4-5 meetings with the Steering Committee.

### Meeting Cadence / Key Topics:

- Meeting 1: Project introduction, engagement strategy review, early data findings
- Meeting 2: Market analysis review, opportunity identification, engagement progress check-in
- Meeting 3: Draft recommendations review, prioritization exercise, implementation discussion
- Meeting 4: Plan refinement, launch strategy, next steps and roles

Between meetings, we'll maintain communication through summary memos and solicit feedback on key materials, treating the committee as expert reviewers who can pressure-test ideas within their respective spheres.

## **2.5 Interviews**

One-on-one and small group interviews provide crucial qualitative depth. We'll conduct interviews with individuals who:

- Represent diverse perspectives not already on the Steering Committee
- Have unique insights into downtown's evolution or future potential
- May be hesitant to speak candidly in larger public forums
- Represent historically underrepresented voices in planning processes

Interviews will explore perceptions of downtown's transformation, barriers to fuller participation or investment, priorities for the next decade, and concerns about equity and inclusion in downtown's growth.

## **2.6 Survey**

It has been over 10 years since we conducted a survey of residents, businesses, employees, stakeholders and more. It may be worthwhile to launch a survey update with the same or



similar questions to compare opinions and changing attitudes about Downtown.

- Core Questions: Replicate key questions from 2015 to enable direct comparison
- New Focus Areas: Emerging issues (remote work impacts, retail recovery, housing affordability, climate resilience)
- Strategic Distribution: Through DGRI listserv, social media, partner networks, QR codes at events and businesses

Results will be visualized through compelling infographics shared back with participants—demonstrating transparency and showing that input matters.

## **2.7 Website Updates**

DGRI's website serves as the plan's digital home. We'll provide regular content for the GR Forward page:

- Project timeline and milestone updates
- "We Heard You" synthesis graphics after engagement activities
- Interactive maps showing transformation over time
- Downloadable resources and reports
- Survey links and ways to stay involved
- Event calendars and registration

Content will be designed for clarity and accessibility, avoiding planning jargon and emphasizing visual storytelling.

## **2.8 Focus Groups**

Following initial broad engagement, we'll conduct 3-4 targeted focus groups (8-12 participants each) to drill deeper on topics that emerge as priorities:

### Potential Focus Areas:

- Small business owners
- Retail/restaurant strategies
- Housing affordability and residential experience
- Public space activation and programming
- Mobility, parking, and access
- Safety and inclusivity
- Arts, culture, and nightlife

## **2.9 Community Events**

We recognize that there will be moments when some broader outreach will be necessary to test and prioritize ideas. These “events” can be formal discussions or pop-up activities at key Downtown locations. Interface will work with the internal project team and Steering Committee to develop a calendar of events where the planning process can best engage residents on an informal basis. The types of engagement could include going to existing community meetings,

events, or neighborhood gathering places to introduce ourselves and the project. The exact form will be determined with DGRI and the Steering Committee.

## **2.10 Feedback Synthesis & Documentation**

We view public engagement as a critical source of qualitative and quantitative data. We carefully cull through the responses and feedback along the way to reveal the stories and values of

the community. These are translated into easy-to-understand infographics and shared with the public to reinforce the transparency of the process and reveal participants' priorities. This rigorous approach to not just engaging the public but also in capturing and illustrating the findings is essential in moving ideas and policies forward. This includes:

**"We Heard You" Infographics:** Visual summaries of input themes, shared publicly shortly after the event. This builds trust by showing immediate responsiveness.

**Detailed Synthesis Memos:** For internal team and Steering Committee review, analyzing input patterns, surprising findings, areas of consensus and disagreement, and implications for plan recommendations.

**Engagement Summary Report:** A comprehensive document (included in the final plan) that illustrates:

- Who participated (demographics, representation)
- What we heard (themes, priorities, concerns)
- How input shaped recommendations

## **TASK 3 - RESEARCH AND EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS**

### **3.1 Existing Plans and Projects Review**

The team will review all recent reports, plans and studies that are relevant to the study area, including adjacent planning initiatives. We will collect information on recently proposed development projects, permits, capital expenditures, and zoning changes. Strategies and proposed investments will be summarized graphically for discussion purposes to understand the context of the project and help us build on previous work. Our team is interested in the following questions: What previous proposals have (and have not) happened and why? And; What is on tap to help shape Grand Rapids going forward?

The process:

- Identify goals and priorities to build on or update
- Map change and development since GR Forward
- Review remaining to-do items from previous plans with a discussion of the barriers to implementation

### **3.2 Inventory and Existing Conditions Assessment**

The Interface team will review the data provided by DGRI and the City to develop an inventory of maps and summary graphics for public presentations that describe the following variables:

- Demographic trends analysis;
- Research and present demographic trends/characteristics of residents and workers in Downtown;
- Update context maps illustrating regional connections and economic drivers;
- Map community assets such as institutions, employment centers, and open space;
- Analyze Downtown infrastructure including water, sewer, stormwater, energy, and food production;
- Review crime statistics;
- Develop an organizational mapping of key actors, stakeholders, influencers
- Map the arts, cultural and community assets
- Identify Downtown's subdistricts / character areas including but not limited to retail zones, government offices, the central business district, unique neighborhoods, major institutional campuses and the riverfront
- Create an events calendar of current Downtown programming
- Map Downtown public spaces, parks and other amenities
- Map "customer" experience of Downtown workers and visitors
- Identify the key pedestrian routes
- Identify and map current navigation and wayfinding
- Create a daytime vs. nighttime analysis to understand the experience at different times of the day

### **3.3: In-depth Parcel Research and Redevelopment Database**

To maximize the plan's functionality and support its implementation, the team will develop a comprehensive database that details ownership (public by agency, private by name), land use, current zoning, parcel size, most recent sale date, and sale price by parcel. Particular attention will be given to vacant and / or underutilized publicly owned parcels, with an eye toward their reuse in the future.

From this analysis we will develop a susceptibility to change analysis for Downtown that utilizes our in-depth land use and parcel database. The intent is to identify key redevelopment opportunities according to the existing site constraints and level of resources required for their redevelopment.

- Current land use and zoning;
- Map recent and proposed investment
- Identify commercial types and conditions;
- Identify underutilized land and buildings and create a database and map of currently vacant storefronts and commercial spaces
- Map the "susceptibility to change" for every parcel Downtown based upon vacancy, ownership and other factors
- Map the active and inactive frontages for each parcel and building Downtown to understand the gaps in the user experience

### **3.4 Downtown Economy and Retail Assessment**

Ninigret Partners will perform an assessment of the local economy and small businesses in the study area. This includes undertaking a number of key tasks:

- A review of existing plans and business surveys;
- Identify competitive locations across the region for different economic activities (healthcare, retail, office, etc)
- An assessment of the business mix and trends seen Downtown including its growth, scale and industry concentration and how that compares to the region as a whole;
- Characterize and segment the street front business mix to sort through their prospective customer bases including: consumer-centric (restaurants, retail); household services; local professional services (insurance, local law, accountants, etc.); financial services; “tech”; and traded professional services (architects, marketing firms, etc.);
- Review city programs that support local businesses and landlords housing local businesses, including pipeline development for new local businesses;
- Identify the mix of employment space types including incubators, coworking, “industrial”, labs, office, and retail along the downtown area;
- Review tourism data and initiatives;
- Understand the seasonality of Downtown retail and restaurant sales;
- Identify the Downtown trade area using sources such cell phone data; and
- Map the TIF district and downtown revenue analysis.

### **3.5 Emerging Trends and Best Practice Research in Downtown Management**

The team will collect information and data regarding the present span of control and activities operating under the DGRI, other quasi governmental organizations, and public/private organizations that have an active role in developing and managing downtown infrastructure, events and venues.

For DGRI and its associated entities:

- Map the entities and identify their principal roles in what they do (operator, funder, facilitator, storyteller, recruiter, curator);
- Core goals and mission of the entities (why were they created; why do they exist?) to help identify potential mission creep concerns;
- Examine trends in sources and uses of revenue by operating line; identify cross subsidies; and understand contribution margins; separate “capital spending” from operating expenses, and subsidies;
- Head counts / FTEs across activities;
- Interviews with the senior management team to identify issues and opportunities;
- Senior executive calendar review - where are they spending their time and why?
- Current activity metrics / measurements of success

“Best Practices”

- Identify key areas for assessment e.g., safety, public funding, measuring success, revenue models, “event density”;

- Conduct primary and secondary research examining awards, published articles, annual reports of select downtown groups, team network survey to identify high performing downtown organizations, among other activities;
- Identify 2 to 3 “benchmark” downtowns to “deep dive” the management approach (e.g., metrics, performance dashboards), funding (grants, assessments, activity-based revenue), and scope of services; this may include interviews with organizational leaders from other downtown organizations;

### **3.6: Summary of Opportunities and Challenges**

All of the research and analysis will be summarized into a graphically sophisticated Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints slideshow. This document will serve as the basis for the development key goals and recommendations that will comprise the final plan.

## **TASK 4 - PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Vision and Goals**

Building from the data inventory, market analysis, and findings from our discussions with local stakeholders, a draft vision, statement of goals and criteria to guide the vision for sustainable and inclusive growth for Downtown will be developed/ updated for review by DGRI and the Steering Committee. These goals and objectives will guide the recommendations developed for different elements of the plan.

### **4.2 Land Use and Zoning Actions**

The Vision & Action Plan should define an action-oriented means of guiding investment by public and private organizations to meet local objectives. The Downtown will continue to change; such change should be grounded in what DGRI and partners would like to see for its future. Our team will develop a future land use plan that is market driven for all properties in the study area.

From this work, our team will identify potential development scenarios for key opportunity sites. We will first create a development program for each site based upon the market study. We will then “test fit” the program to each site to identify the potential density and layout for discussion with the City and local partners, taking into account existing zoning regulations and possible recommendations for change. Tables that quantify the development potential (building type, square footage, and number of units) of each focus area scenario will accompany the site plans, along with suggestions about phasing. Our team will:

- Identify the potential barriers and trade-offs for each development scenario;
- Develop a programmatic toolkit that can facilitate or catalyze development opportunities or policy goals such as broad range of housing price points, job accessibility, or parking provision; and
- Identify assembly strategies as necessary to enable specific development opportunities.

### **4.3 Public Realm / Downtown Experience Actions**

Many recognize that the value of Downtown is judged in large part by the activity and interest generated from its streets and public spaces. For this reason, we will create a series of recommendations that will help to augment, or where necessary transform, the existing streetscape, parks and open spaces into a source of communal pride and activity.

Specifically, we will:

- Create concepts to improve specific existing parks including Heartside and other key public spaces including gateways, civic spaces and key corridors;
- Identify opportunities for new and/or expanded quality of life amenities and park space, as appropriate.
- Determine ways to further connect existing projects and amenities with planned projects and amenities, to make Downtown more connected with fewer gaps.
- Identify opportunities for creative public space activation, including consideration of alleyways, public art, creative signage and temporary street closures.
- Identify potential opportunities to activate pop-up and/or permanent retail opportunities in Downtown.

#### **4.4 Economic Development & Retail Recovery Actions**

To be competitive in attracting business and investments, cities must also be competitive for attracting workers and retaining students, who then become residents. This interconnected approach to living and working in the same community as the complete “economic development” package requires the ability for a community to provide the right types of housing, infrastructure, recreation and a healthy environment. To meet these needs going forward, DGRI will need to explore new funding sources and new approaches, including multiple innovative partnerships, to deliver a holistic infrastructure and other services and programs.

To best position Downtown for long-term sustainability, recommendations will relate to identifying business types, improving the area’s competitive position, and diversifying the economic base. In addition, Ninigret Partners will build on their national work around downtown housing to develop specific strategies to support and finance housing of all types. Specifically, recommendations will include:

- Positioning Downtown as an investment opportunity and a location for the various customer bases Downtown within the context of Grand Rapids and the region;
- Strategies to increase confidence and encourage and/or support individual owners thinking of investing including regulatory and financial incentives;
- Strategies to right-size retail typologies appropriate to different downtown geographies (e.g. daily-needs, food & beverage, experiential, convenience-service);
- Align recommended retail uses to: street typology and block context and customer capture potential;
- Housing strategies to help build more of a critical mass Downtown while supporting existing residents; and
- Working closely with DGRI on overcoming implementation barriers.

#### **4.5 Mobility and DGRI**

TYLin will review the progress toward meeting Downtown transportation goals from GR Forward and other documents. TY Lin will present and discuss various options for DGRI to consider regarding their role in infrastructure and transportation projects going forward.

#### **4.6 Plan Workshop**

Workshop with DGRI to determine most appropriate plan product

#### **4.7 The Action Plan**

We will develop an Action Plan that identifies immediate - medium- and long-term implementation strategy to achieve the goals that result from this planning process and parallel ones too. Together with the project team, we will develop a strategy that leverages existing plans and ongoing relationships and initiatives to generate a whole greater than a simple sum of Parts.

Working with the Steering Committee we will organize all recommendations into a spreadsheet that aligns the goals with the recommendations and identifies the necessary partners and funding sources to turn the ideas into reality. A clear list of priority projects and timeframes will be included to help local organizations and funders plan for the upcoming 10 years of work ahead.

Specifically, the implementation timeline will include:

- Identification of priority development, infrastructure, and open space projects that will have catalytic impacts on Downtown, improve connectivity, and create excitement and vitality; and
- Identification of financing options and necessary public incentives and/or investment.

#### **4.8 Downtown Business Model**

The team will take the findings from the organizational assessment and overlay the action plan and items described in sections 4.1 to 4.7 to create a business model to support and sustain the efforts. This may include organizational realignment and revenue generation ideas. The team will utilize a template such as the Business Model Canvas, modified to fit a downtown management entity, to identify on a single page key activities, success drivers, partners, funding models, metrics.

#### **4.9 Draft and Final Plan**

All of the analysis and recommendations will be organized into one well-tailored, place-specific, graphic-heavy document that describes the policies, goals and action steps developed during the planning process. A draft copy will be provided to the Advisory Committee for review. After comments have been received, we will create a final document for distribution.

Our team will coordinate with the City on key presentations intended to roll out the plan to the public and key stakeholders and agencies as determined by the City. It should be noted that the design of the final document will be done with the City and Advisory Committee. We are not assuming this is a traditional book. We feel the final product should be designed to best

reach the multiple audiences for this work. Whether that ends up as a book, online presentation, posters, short document or some combination of these or other ideas will be based upon our discussions with you and how you will use the study after Completion.

#### **4.10 Plan Launch and Marketing**

##### Launch Strategy & Materials

- Develop plan launch and rollout communications strategy
- Create "continuation story" messaging
- Develop initial implementation communications framework

##### Virtual Engagement

- Communications Push #3
- Final discussions for Draft > Final Plan

##### In-Person Engagement (1 nights, 2 days, 1 AT staffer) - later Summer/early Fall

- Final Board presentation
- Do we want to do something celebratory or pop-up?



# ***Downtown Vitals Report***

*Published January 2026*



**DOWNTOWN**  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

*Ribbon cutting ceremony at Bamboo Coworking* →



NEW STOREFRONT BUSINESSES

**+1**

in December  
21 businesses opened this year

STOREFRONT VACANCY

**21%**

in December  
23 businesses closed this year

OFFICE VACANCY

**10.8%**

in Q4  
vs. 10.7% this time last year

OFFICE BASE RENT

**\$22.56**/sqft

in Q4  
vs. \$23.32 this time last year

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

**+1%**

vs. last quarter (Q3)  
+4% vs. this time last year

HOTEL OCCUPANCY

**-24%**

vs. last month (October)  
-0.4% vs. this time last year

VISITOR ACTIVITY

**-6%**

vs. last month (November)  
+2% vs. this time last year

DAILY EMPLOYEE POPULATION

**-0.3%**

vs. last month (November)  
-1% vs. this time last year

RESIDENT ACTIVITY

**-6%**

vs. last month (November)  
-21% vs. this time last year

DASH CIRCULATOR RIDERSHIP

**-19%**

vs. last month (October)  
+10% vs. this time last year

DASH WORK RIDERSHIP

**-11%**

vs. last month (October)  
-4% vs. this time last year

CURRENT ACTIVE INVESTMENT

**\$530M**



## Business Openings | Updated December 2025

Reserve became **Allora Coastal Italian**  
Restaurant - February

**The Cottage**  
Coworking Space - March

**Kawa Sushi**  
Restaurant - April

**Rebel Nell\***  
Soft Goods Retail - October

**Bamboo Coworking**  
Coworking & Office - December

**Ashton** inside the BOB  
Bar - March

**Cottage Inn**  
Pizza Shop - September

**Two Sons Pizza Pop-Up**  
QSR - November

**Vel Sushi and Pho**  
Restaurant - May

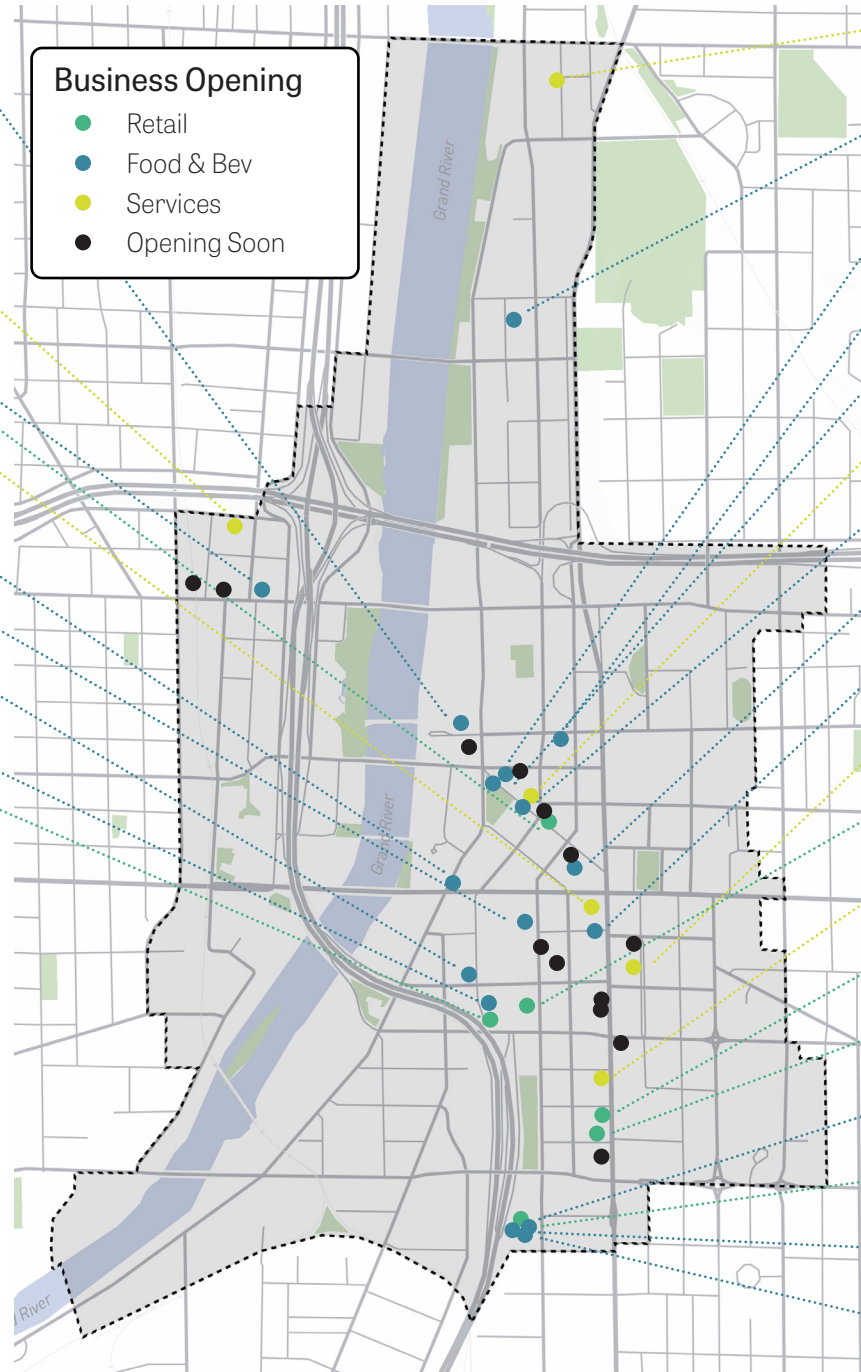
**Earthly Refillery**  
Soft Goods Retail - August

### DDA Retail Innovation Grant

Fiscal Year	# of Businesses	Total Spent
FY2018	1	\$60,000.00
FY2019	1	\$45,000.00
FY2020	5	\$133,385.70
FY2021	5	\$109,333.00
FY2022	1	\$18,448.17
FY2023	6	\$167,894.00
FY2024	5	\$105,433.59
FY2025	8	\$213,067.00
FY2026	4	\$67,536.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>\$920,107.46</b>

### Business Opening

- Retail
- Food & Bev
- Services
- Opening Soon



**Midwest Movement Co.** expansion  
Fitness Studio - April

**SILVA**  
Restaurant - February

**Poke Toki**  
QSR - January

**Morning Ritual**  
Café - June

**Twisted Tap Distillery**  
Bar & Tasting Room - April

**Grand Rapids Game Show\***  
Group Entertainment - November

Le Macaron became **Sugar Bar**  
Food Retail & Beverages - February

**Garden District**  
Restaurant - February

**OTONO Café** inside OTONO  
Café - March

**Ladies Literary Club** reopened  
Community Space & Café - August

**Niksi**  
Soft Goods Retail - February

**Selah Studio**  
Art Studio - October

**Dolly's Delights\***  
Bakery - September

**NIDO - The Urban Nest\***  
Soft Goods Retail & Event Space - March

Pinktail Poke became **Rudy's Sub Shop**  
QSR - February

**Her Daily Bread**  
Food Retail - October

**Go Vegan GR**  
QSR - May

**Myanmar Meals**  
QSR - November



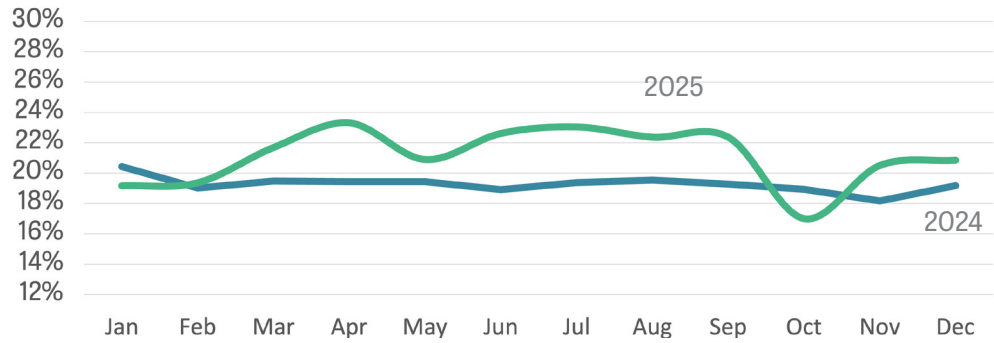
**DOWNTOWN**  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

\* received DDA Retail Innovation Grant  
QSR = Quick Service Restaurant

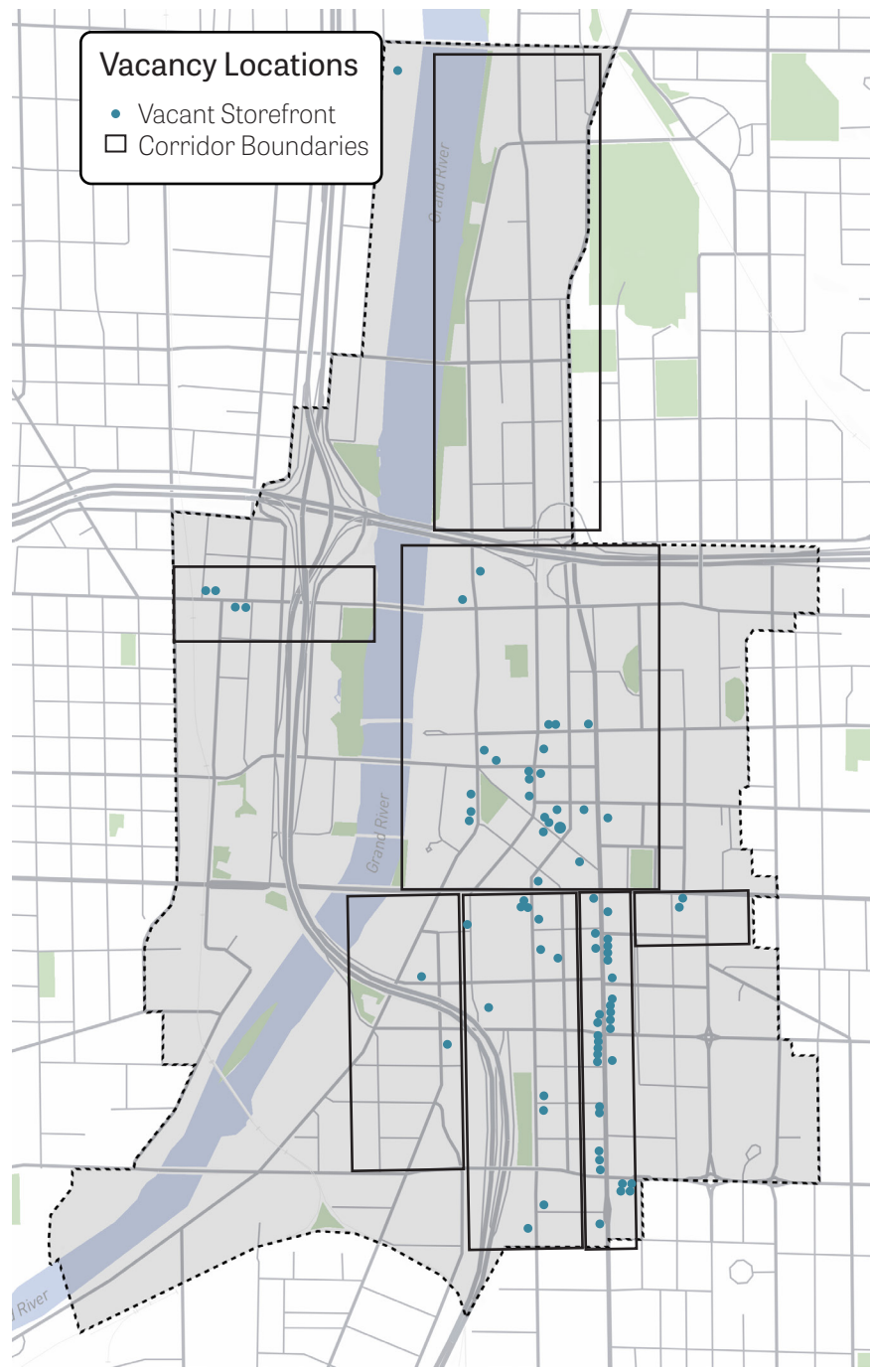
Source: Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

**23 storefront businesses closed**  
in Downtown in 2025  
61% Food & Bev - 17% Retail - 22% Services

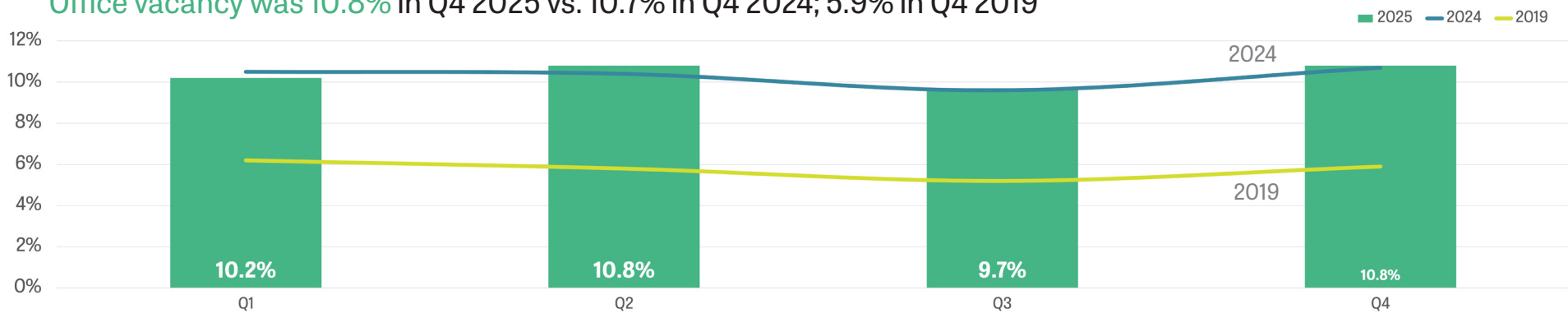
Storefront vacancy was 21% in December 2025  
y-axis truncated to highlight month-over-month changes



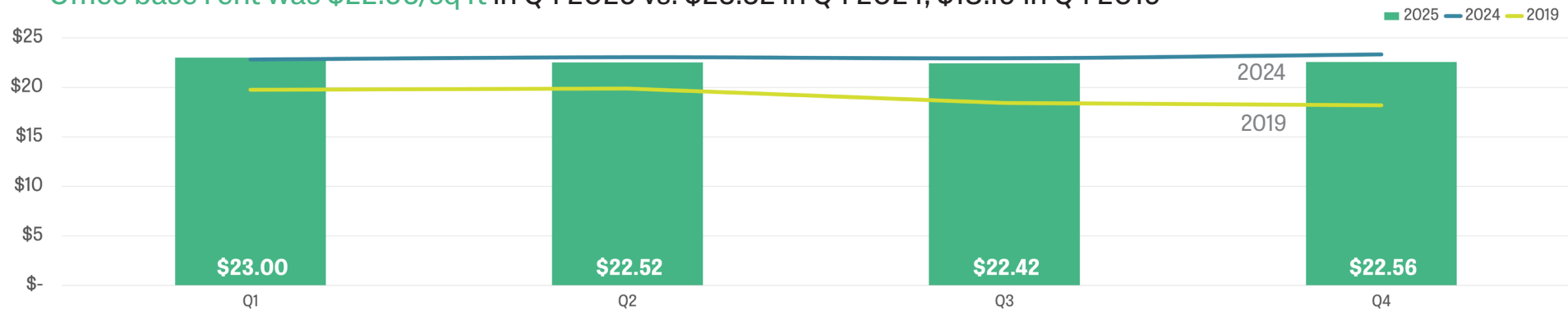
	Storefronts	Vacancies	Vacancy %
Bridge Street	25	4	16%
Center City	127	30	24%
Monroe Center <sup>1</sup>	54 <sup>1</sup>	12 <sup>1</sup>	22% <sup>1</sup>
Fulton & Jefferson	21	2	10%
Heartside: Division	99	32	32%
Heartside: Ionia	73	13	18%
Heartside: C. Chavez	12	2	17%
Monroe North	29	0	0%
Other	17	1	6%
DISTRICT TOTALS:	403	84	21%



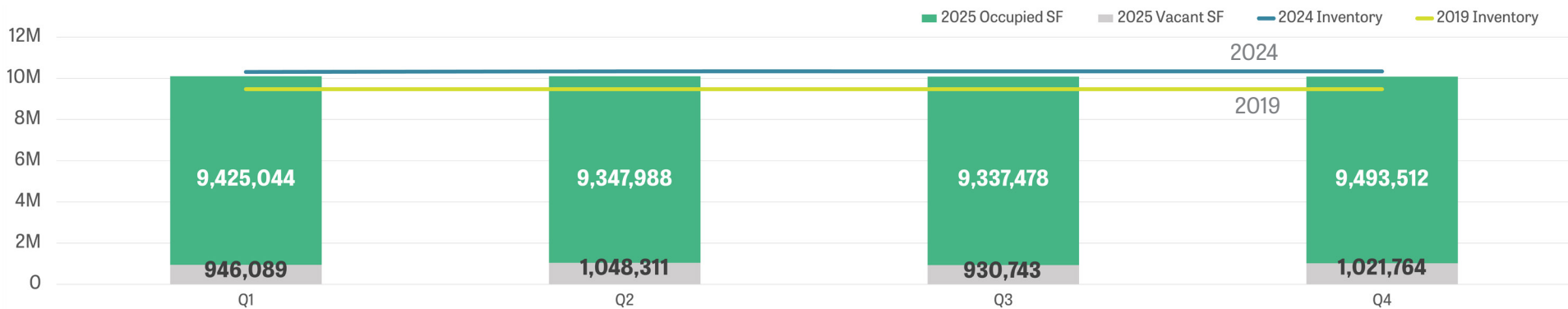
Office vacancy was 10.8% in Q4 2025 vs. 10.7% in Q4 2024; 5.9% in Q4 2019



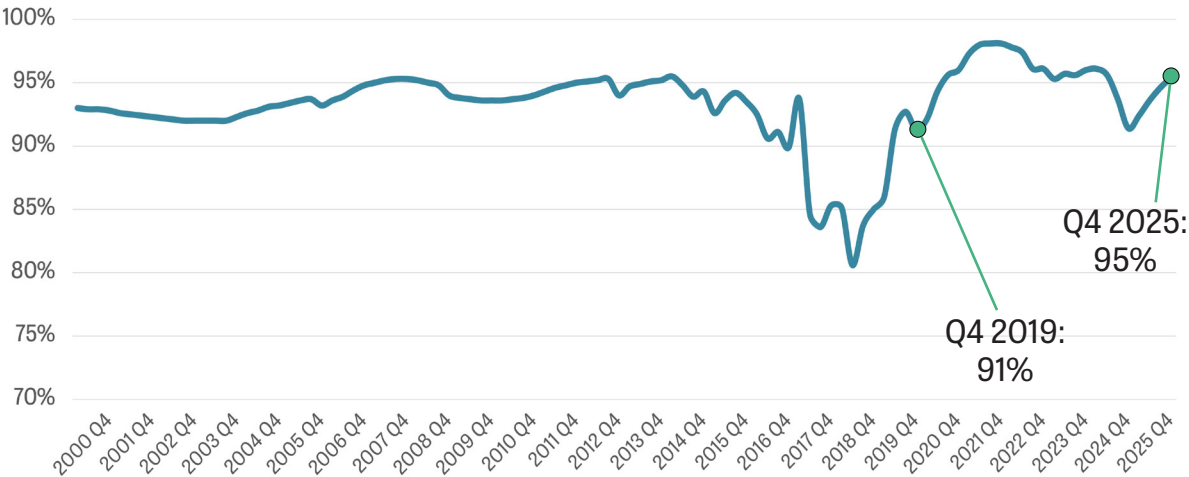
Office base rent was \$22.56/sq ft in Q4 2025 vs. \$23.32 in Q4 2024; \$18.19 in Q4 2019



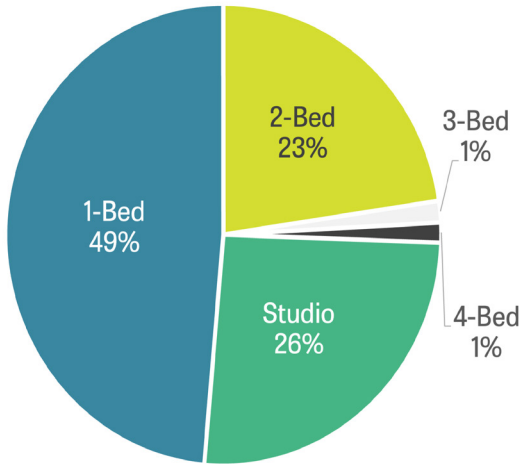
There were 10.1 million square feet of office inventory in Q4 2025



Housing occupancy increased +0.8% vs. Q3 2025; +4% vs. Q4 2024 +5% vs. Q4 2019  
y-axis truncated to highlight year-over-year changes

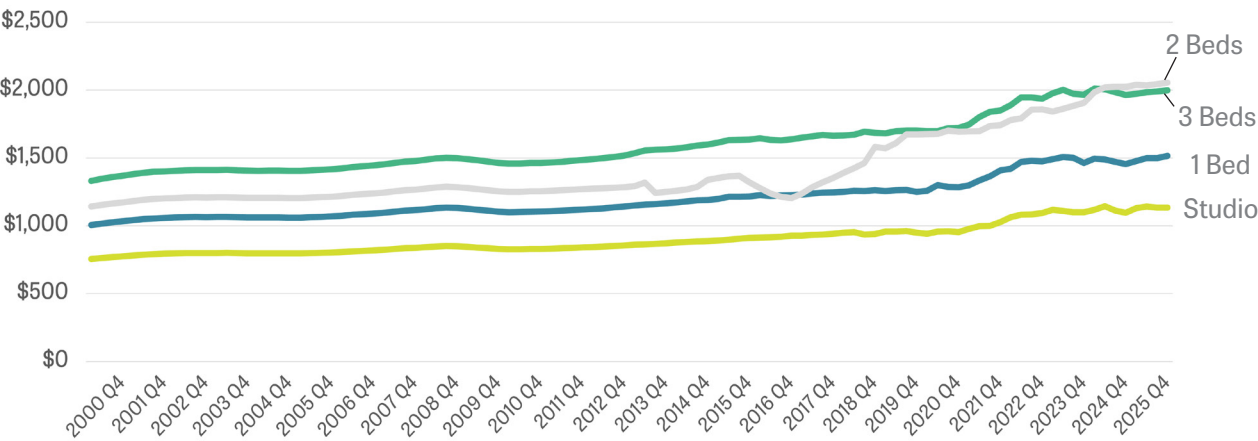


Distribution of Units by # of Rooms

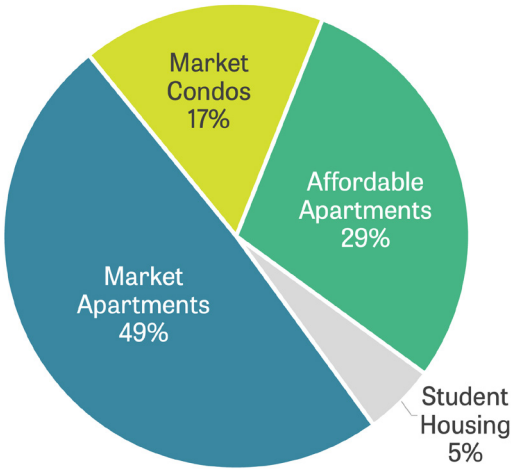


There are **293** units currently under construction and **1,856** in the planning & development pipeline

Average asking rent per unit increased +1% vs. Q3 2025; +2% vs. Q4 2024; +19% vs. Q4 2019



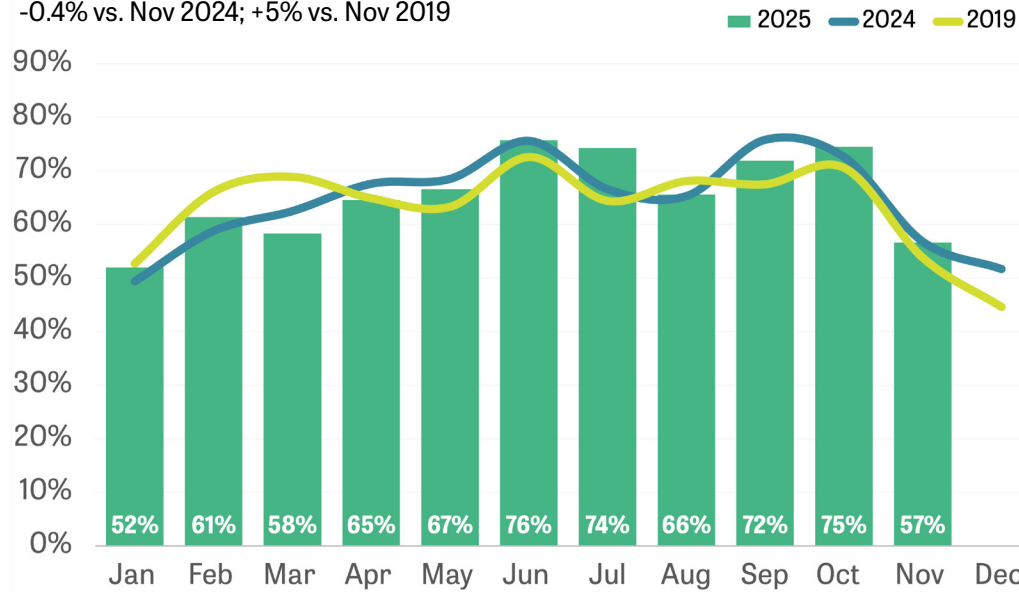
Distribution of Units by Rate Type



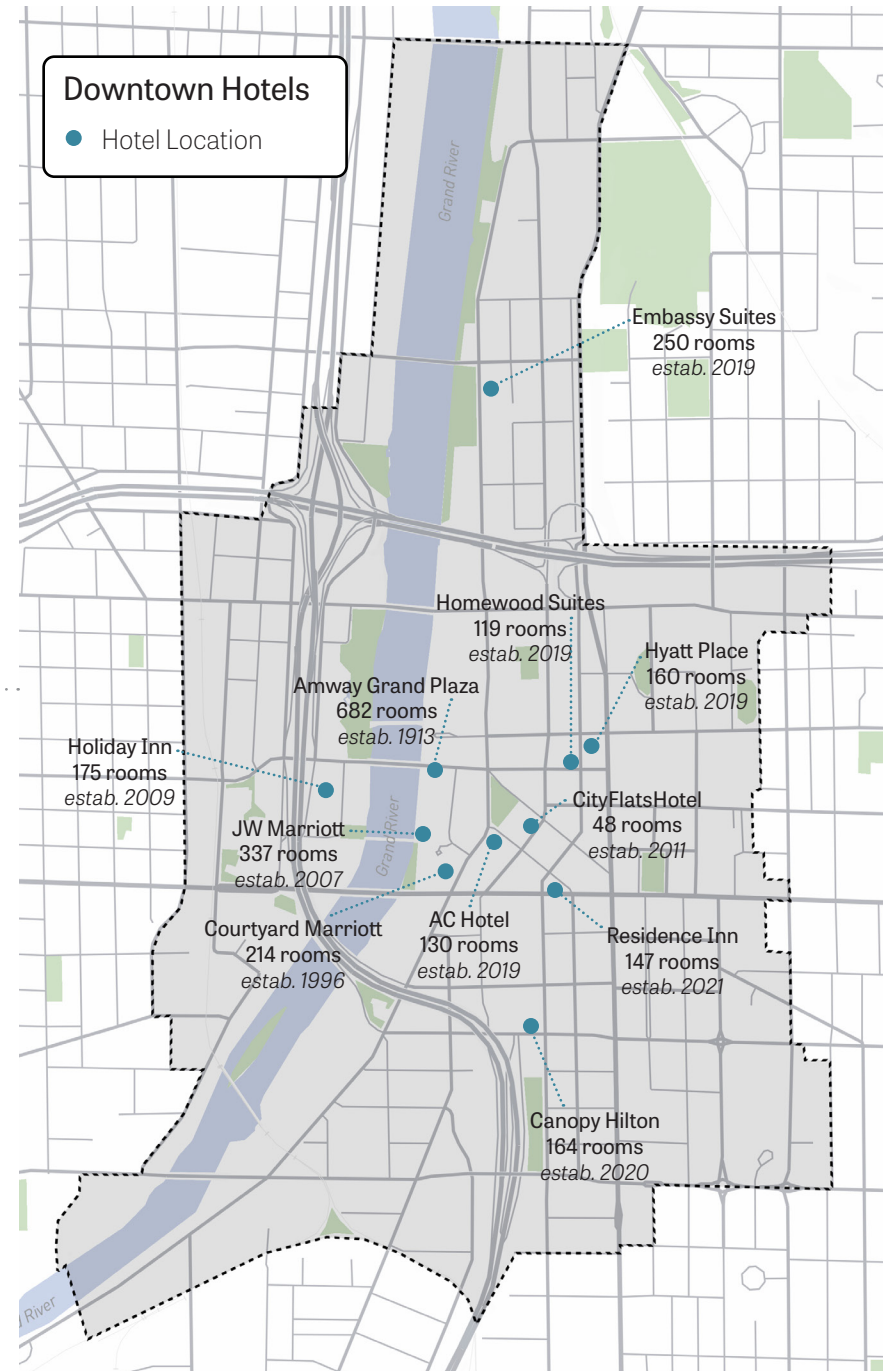
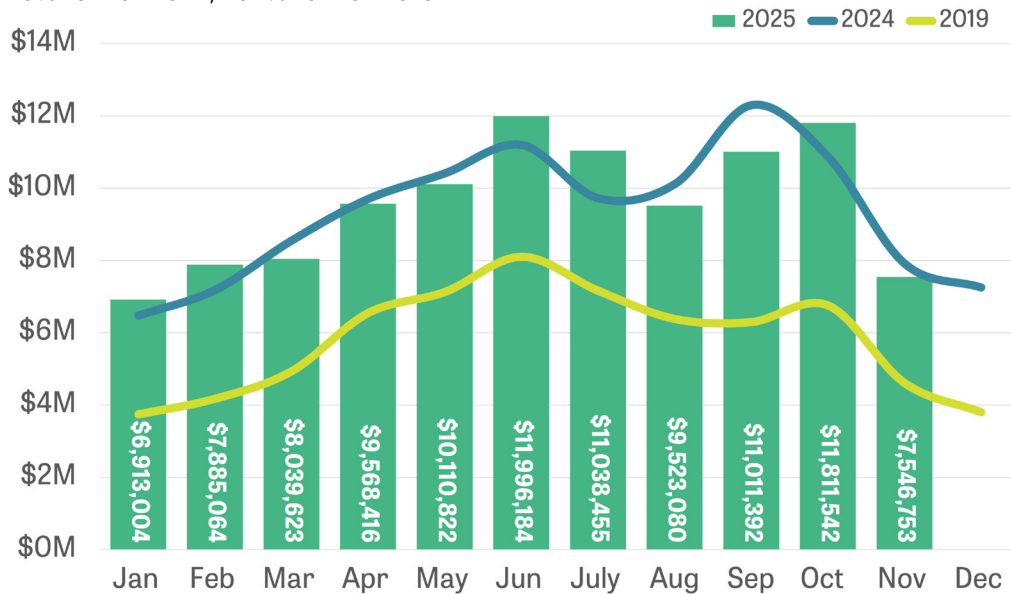


# Hotel Occupancy | Updated November 2025

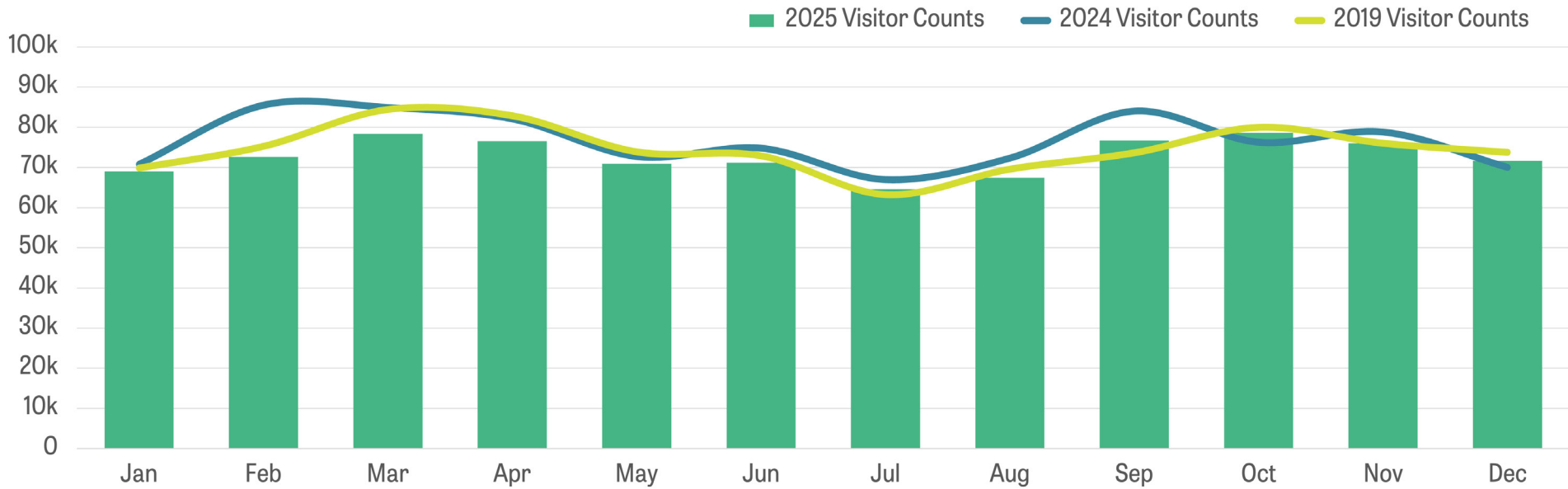
Hotel occupancy decreased -24% in Nov 2025 vs. Oct 2025;  
-0.4% vs. Nov 2024; +5% vs. Nov 2019



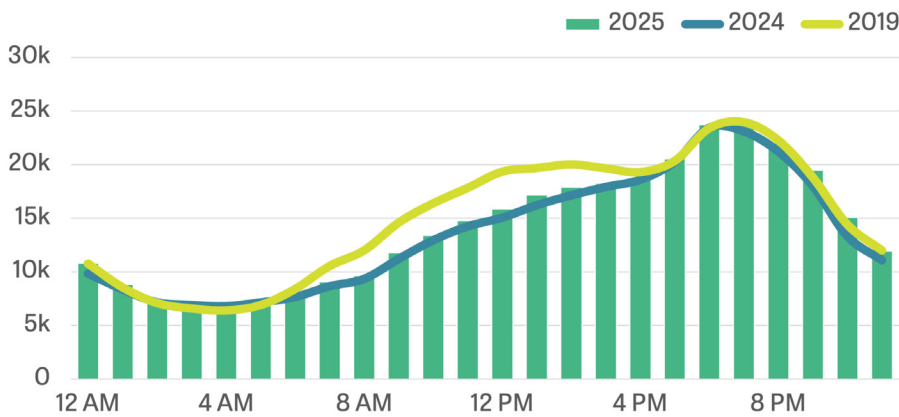
Hotel revenue decreased -36% in Nov 2025 vs. Oct 2025;  
-5% vs. Nov 2024; +64% vs. Nov 2019



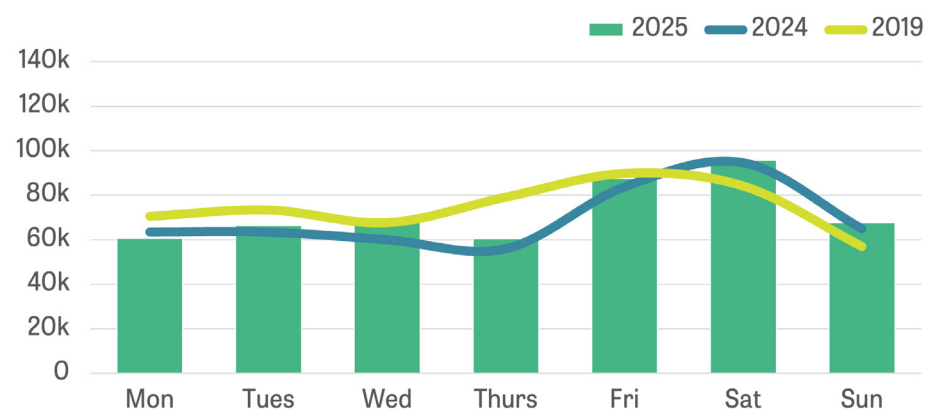
Daily average visit counts decreased -6% in Dec 2025 vs. Nov 2025; +2% vs. Dec 2024; -3% vs. Dec 2019



From 5 PM - 11 PM daily average hourly counts increased +5% in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024; +1% vs. Dec 2019

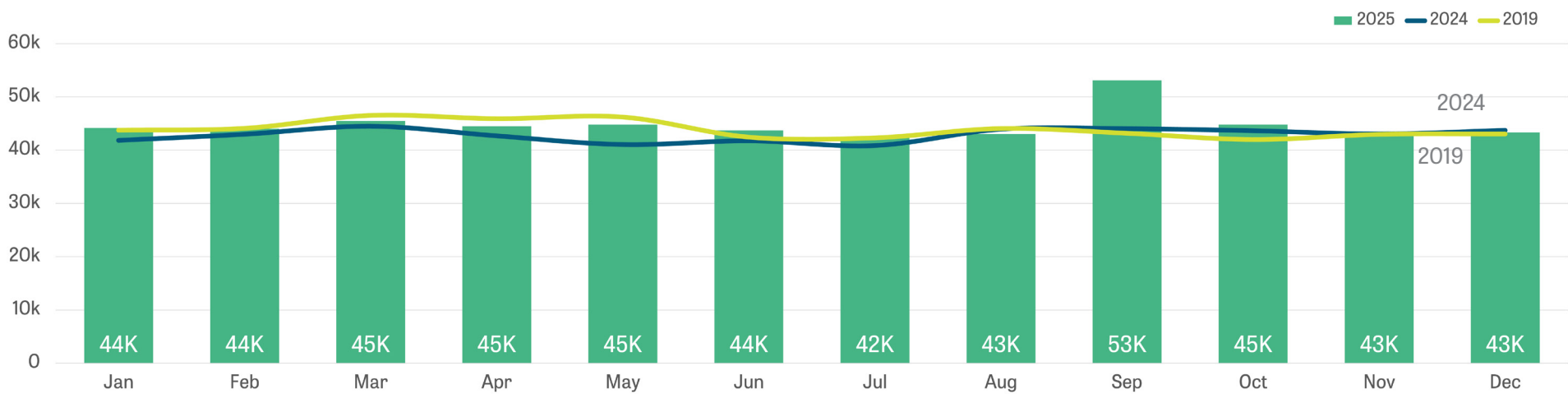


Thursday average daily counts decreased -23% in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024; +8% vs. Dec 2019

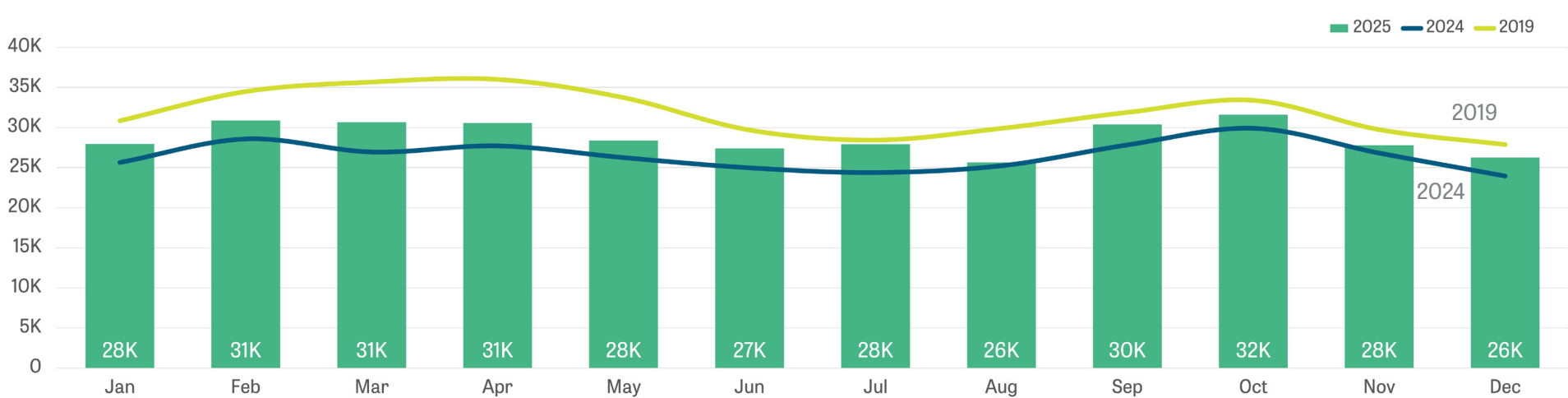




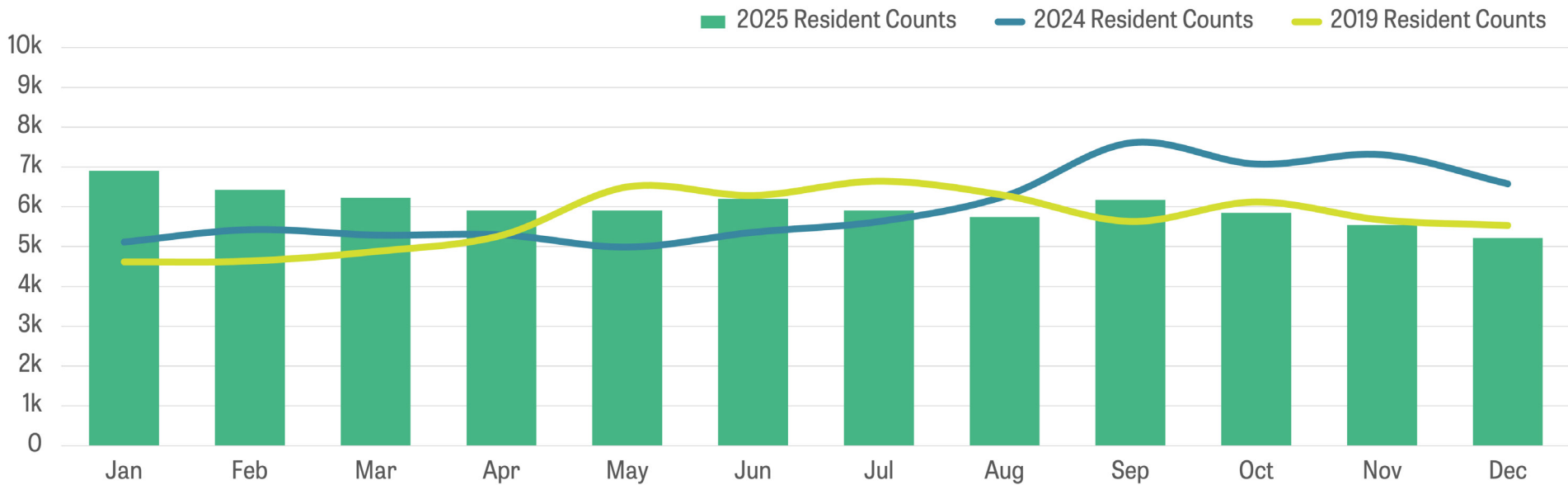
Unique employees<sup>1</sup> decreased -0.3% in Dec 2025 vs. Nov 2025; 1% vs. Dec 2024; +1% vs. Dec 2019



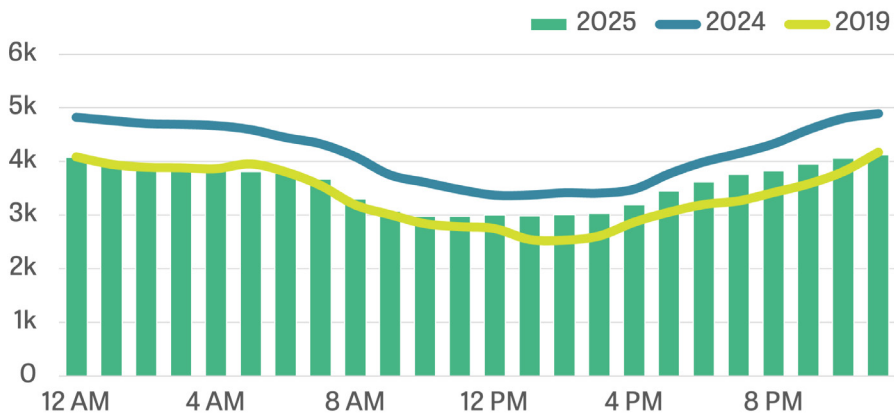
Average daily workforce<sup>2</sup> decreased -5% in Dec 2025 vs. Nov 2025; +10% vs. Dec 2024; -6% vs. Dec 2019



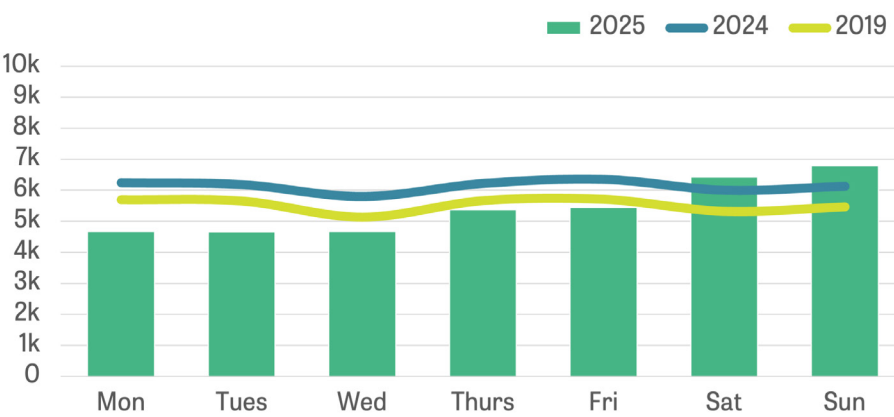
Daily average resident counts decreased -6% in Dec 2025 vs. Nov 2025; -21% vs. Dec 2024; -6% vs. Dec 2019



Overall daily average hourly counts decreased -14% in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024; +6% vs. Dec 2019



Saturday average daily counts increased +7% in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024; +21% vs. Dec 2019



## Downtown Ambassador Statistics | Updated December 2025

	December 2025	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	2019 YTD
Graffiti Removals	23	4,086	7,172	1,877
Lbs of Trash Removed	17,275	321,600	376,725	486,000
Snow Removals	6,396	13,774	8,994	12,266
Weeds Abated	0	191,490	374,524	128,332
Business Contacts	299	6,197	7,890	2,014
Pedestrian Assists	6,992	165,979	327,009	168,001
Mobility Assists	116	770	3,399	1,139



Total Ambassador Banked Hours<sup>1</sup> as of November:

1,608.00



**DOWNTOWN**  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

<sup>1</sup> - Banked hours reflect underspent Ambassador hours. Negative hours reflect overspent Ambassador hours.

Source: Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

**1 Clipper Lofts**

anticipated completion: Q1 2026

+35 housing units  
+20,000 sq ft of office space  
\$12,800,000 investment

**2 GRPM River's Edge Work**

anticipated completion: Q1 2026

\$12,000,000 investment

**3 Acrisure Amphitheater**

anticipated completion: May 2026

+190 car parking spaces  
+825 jobs  
\$214,500,000 investment

**4 111 Lyon Residential Conversion**

anticipated completion: Spring 2026

+140 housing units  
-125,000 sq ft of office space  
\$50,000,000 investment

**5 Early Childhood Center @ Rapid Central Station**

anticipated completion: April 2026

\$7,900,000 investment

**6 Verne Barry Place Renovation**

anticipated completion: 2026

\$12,000,000 investment

**7 Amway Soccer Stadium**

anticipated completion: Spring 2027

+104 jobs  
\$175,000,000 investment

**8 Corewell Parking Lots**

anticipated completion: TBD

+40 car parking spaces

**9 Karl & Patricia Betz Living Center**

anticipated completion: June 2027

+118 housing units  
+6,000 sq ft of commercial space  
\$46,000,000 investment

**\$530M**  
in investment

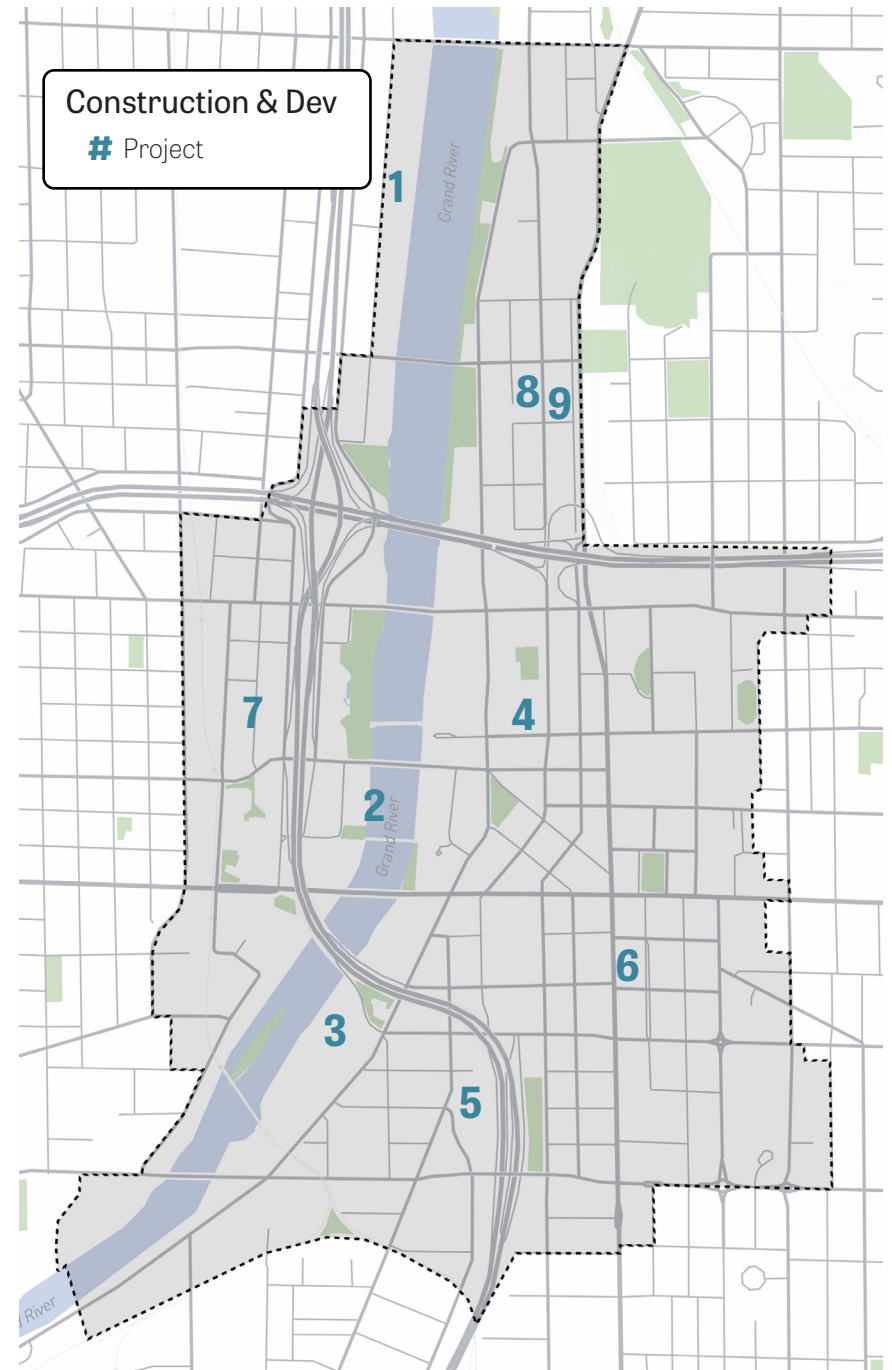
**6k**  
sq ft of commercial space

.....→ **-105k**  
sq ft of office space

**929**  
new jobs

**230**  
car parking spaces

**293**  
housing units





# Grand River Greenway Progress - Local | Updated December 2025

**198 total acres** of  
park improvements

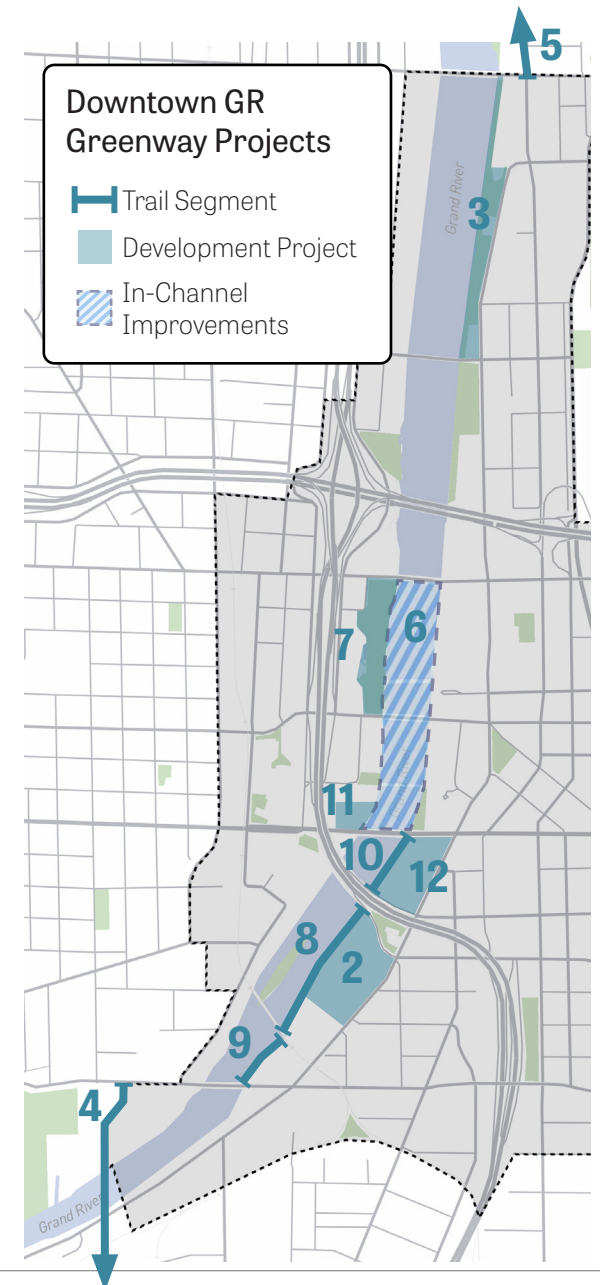
**20 total miles** of  
trail improvements<sup>1</sup>

**\$332M** in total public  
space investment

**\$1.7B** in private  
river-adjacent investment<sup>2</sup>

**\$70M** in DGRI investment<sup>3</sup>  
(DDA, MNTIFA, ARPA) in 2025

<b>1</b>	GRPM River Edge Improvements \$12,000,000	Planning	Design	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion est. March 2026
<b>2</b>	Acrisure Amphitheater \$214,500,000	Planning	Design	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion est. May 2026
<b>3</b>	Canal Park \$9,800,000	Planning	Design	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion est. Summer 2026
<b>4</b>	Oxford Trail \$9,000,000	Planning	Design	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion est. Fall 2026
<b>5</b>	Edges Trail, Leonard To Ann \$9,100,000	Planning	Design	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion est. April 2026
<b>6</b>	Lower Reach In-Channel Improvements \$20,000,000	Planning	Design	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion est. Summer 2026
<b>7</b>	Ah-Nab-Awen Park \$10,300,000	Planning	Design	Permitting TBD	Bidding	Construction	Completion
<b>8</b>	Edges Trail US-131 to Railroad \$19,800,000	Planning	Design	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion est. Oct 2026
<b>9</b>	Railroad to Wealthy \$ TBD	Planning	Design	Permitting TBD	Bidding	Construction	Completion
<b>10</b>	Fulton to US-131 \$ TBD	Planning	Design TBD	Permitting	Bidding	Construction	Completion
<b>11</b>	Blue Dot \$ TBD	Planning	Design	Permitting TBD	Bidding	Construction	Completion
<b>12</b>	Fulton & Market \$797,000,000	Planning	Design	Permitting TBD	Bidding	Construction	Completion



3 - Includes 2025 completed projects Lyon Square & Lower Riverwalk  
Source: Grand River Network



**DOWNTOWN**  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.



**Grand  
River  
Network**

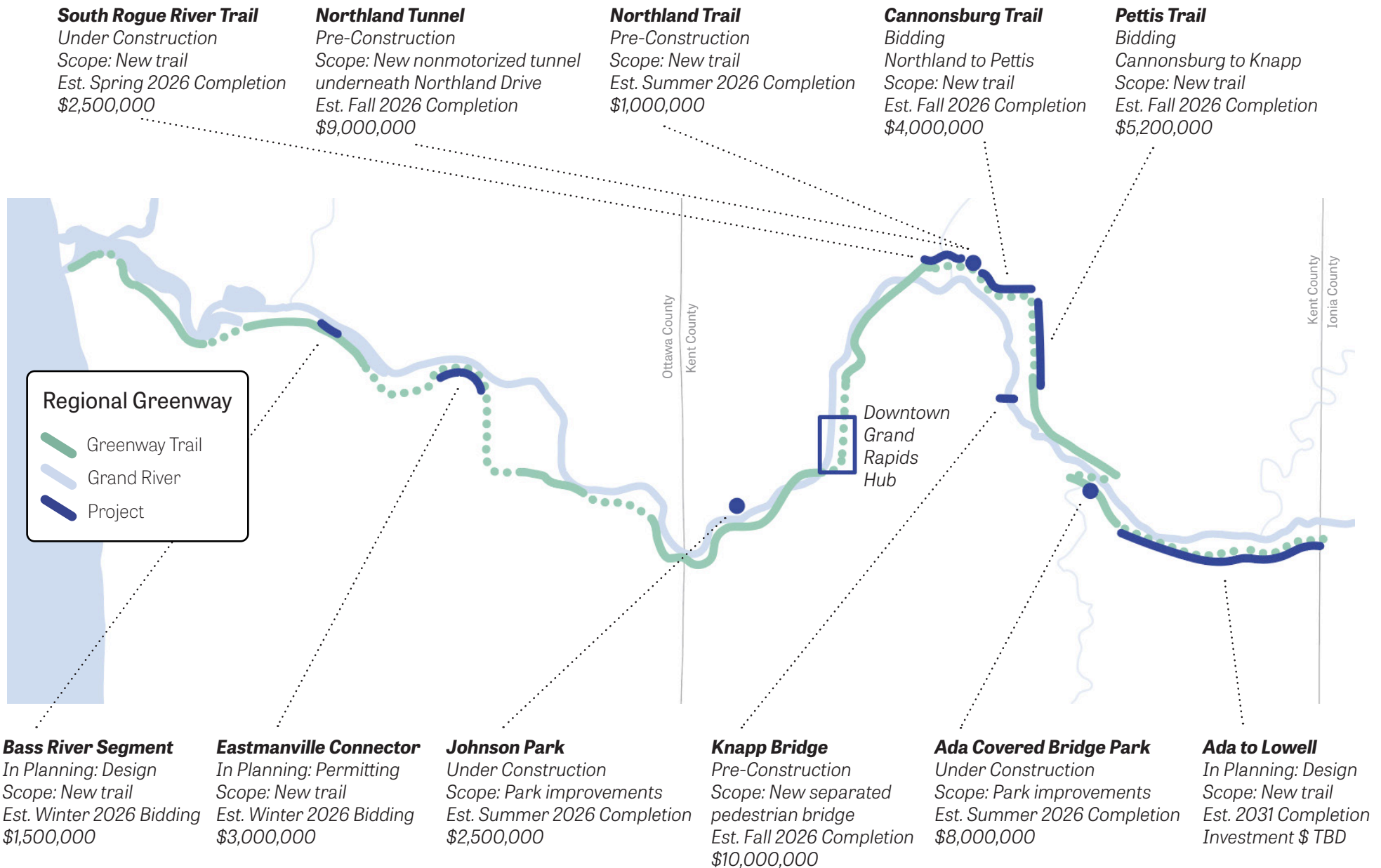
For more information, visit: <https://grandriver.network/upcoming-projects>

1 - Includes 16 miles of ARPA-funded Kent County greenway trail, White Pine Trail to Ada

2 - Completed since 2023 & currently in development pipeline

## Grand River Greenway Progress - Regional | Updated December 2025

The urban core of Grand Rapids is the hub of West Michigan's outdoor recreation system. Beyond Downtown, partners across the region continue progress to establish the **Grand River Greenway** - an 80+ mile network of public parks and trails connecting Lowell to the Lakeshore.



**DOWNTOWN**  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.



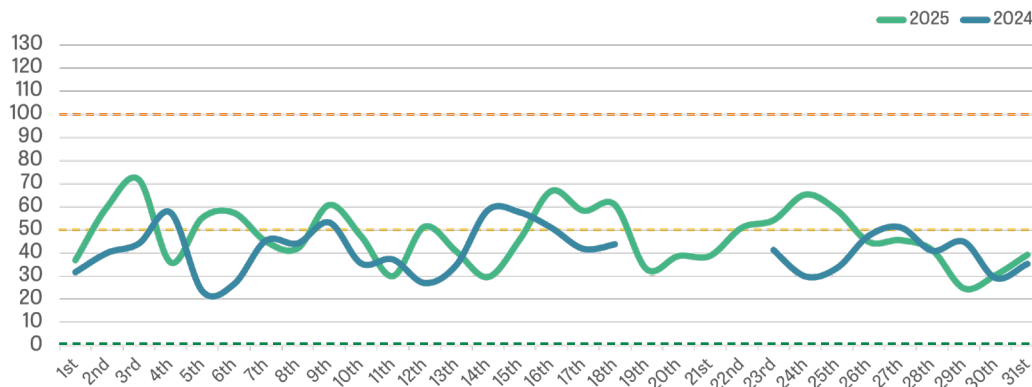
**Grand  
River  
Network**

Source: Grand River Network  
For more information, visit: <https://grandriver.network/upcoming-projects>

**What is AQI?** The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses the Air Quality Index (AQI) to measure air pollution levels of both ozone and particulate materials. You'll sometimes see air quality issues described on your local news using AQI, which measures five major air pollutants known to be hazardous to our health: ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate pollution.<sup>1</sup>

- 0 - 50** Perfect. Poses no health risks.
- 51 - 100** Acceptable but can be problematic for at-risk individuals.
- 101 - 150** Unhealthy for sensitive groups.
- 151 - 200** Healthy individuals will begin to feel effects. Sensitive groups may feel unwell.
- 201 - 300** Very unhealthy air for everyone. Stay indoors.
- 301 - 500** Highly unhealthy air for everyone. This is a dangerous situation.

Average daily maximum AQI increased +15% in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024<sup>2</sup>



## December 2025 Recap

**December 29**  
**César Chávez**  
**20.12**

Best AQI Day

**Community Garden**  
**38.75 avg**

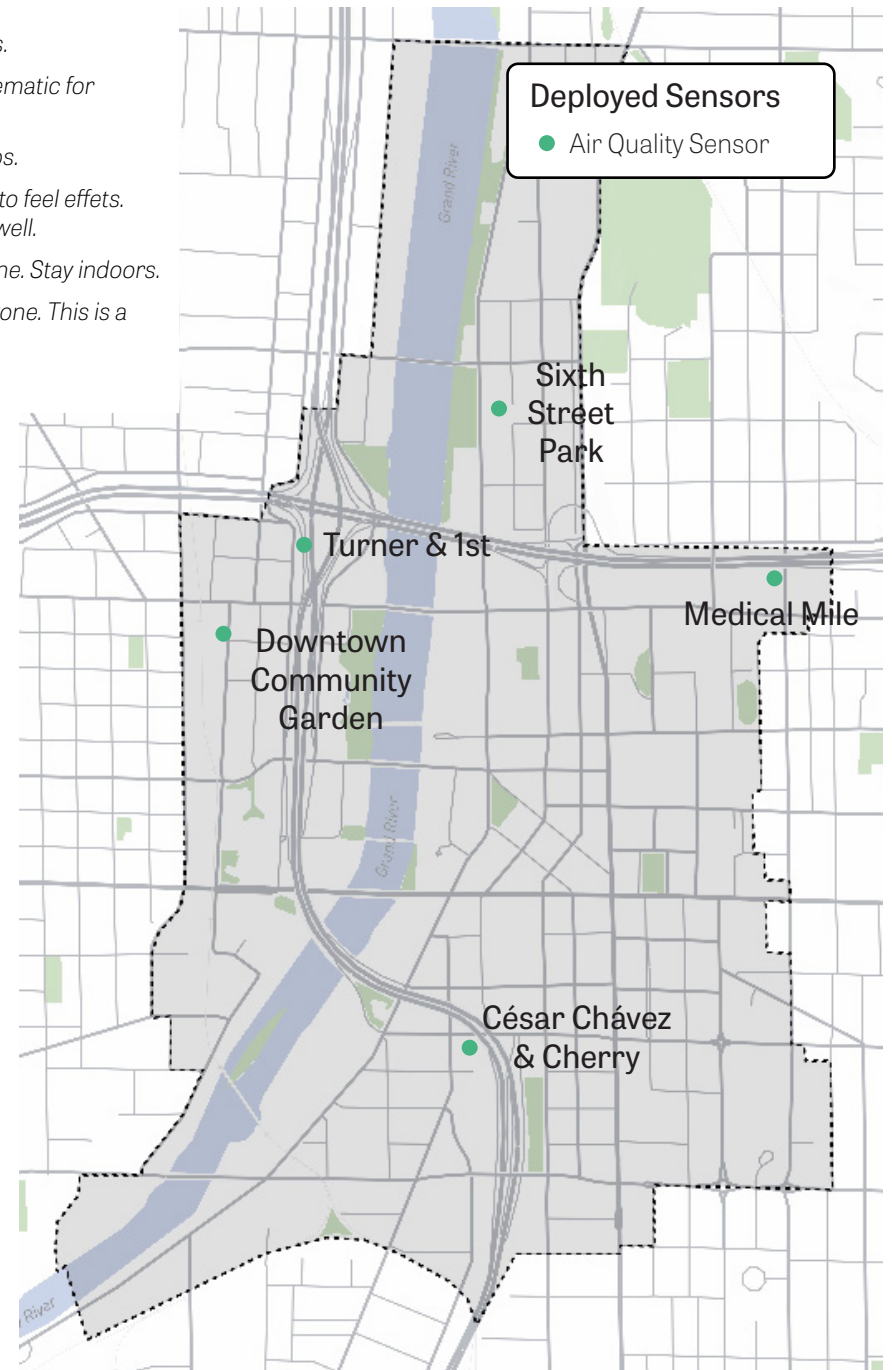
Best Average  
December AQI

**December 3**  
**Sixth Street Park**  
**95.12**

Worst AQI Day

**Sixth Street Park**  
**52.28 avg**

Worst Average  
December AQI

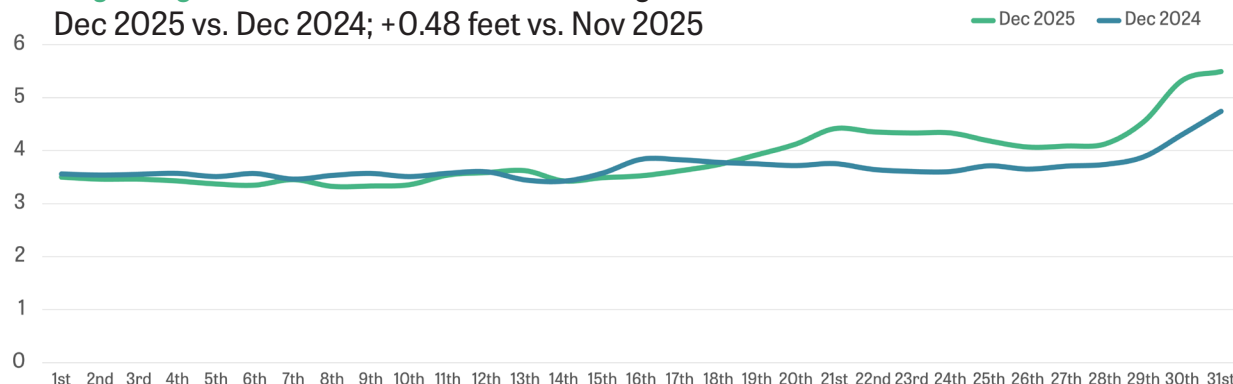


**What is gage height?** Gage height is the distance (or height) of the water surface above the streamgage datum reference point. Gage height is often observed as it relates to landmarks as well as historical data.<sup>2</sup>

**Why it matters:** Gage height is a parameter used to measure water quantity. It is a key indicator in predicting floods, determining flow and informing decisions around infrastructure and water management.

**Learn more here:** [https://waterdata.usgs.gov/blog/gage\\_height/](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/blog/gage_height/)

**Gage height increased +0.18 feet on average in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024; +0.48 feet vs. Nov 2025**

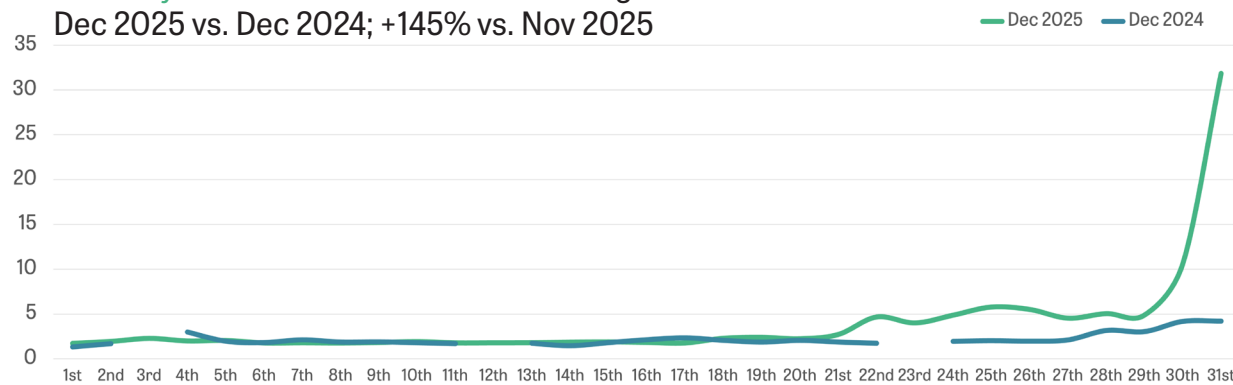


**What is turbidity?** Turbidity is the measure of relative clarity of a liquid. The higher the intensity of scattered light, the higher the turbidity.<sup>2</sup>

**Why it matters:** Increased sedimentation and siltation can occur, which can result in harm to habitat areas for fish and other aquatic life. Particles also provide attachment places for other pollutants, notably metals and bacteria. Thus, turbidity readings can be used as an indicator of potential pollution in a water body.<sup>2</sup>

**Learn more here:** <https://www.usgs.gov/water-science-school/science/turbidity-and-water>

**Turbidity increased +83% FNU<sup>3</sup> on average in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024; +145% vs. Nov 2025**

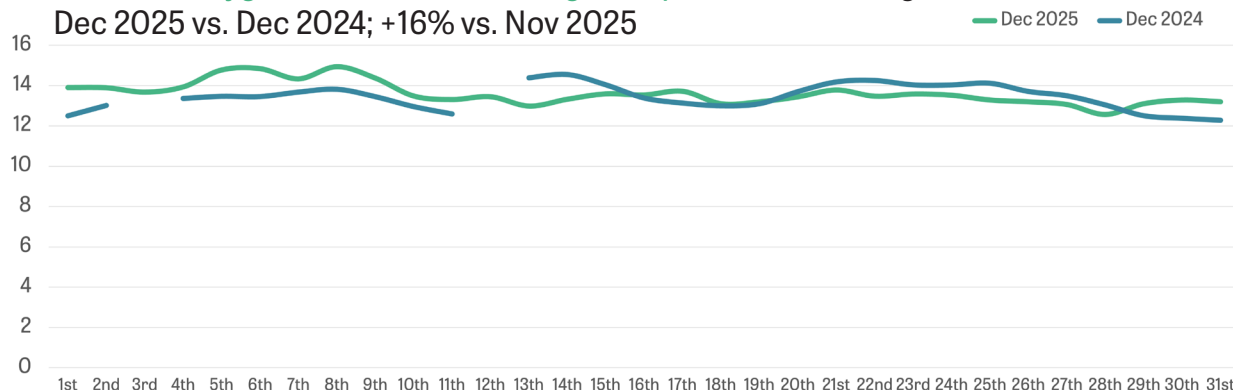


**What is dissolved oxygen?** Dissolved oxygen is a measure of how much oxygen is dissolved in the water - the amount of oxygen available to living aquatic organisms.<sup>2</sup>

**Why it matters:** Fast-moving streams and rivers hold more oxygen, while stagnant waters hold less. When excess organic matter decays, bacteria use up oxygen, leading to eutrophication, i.e. low-oxygen conditions that can kill aquatic life.

**Learn more here:** <https://www.usgs.gov/water-science-school/science/dissolved-oxygen-and-water>

**Dissolved oxygen increased +1% milligrams per liter on average in Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024; +16% vs. Nov 2025**



**DOWNTOWN**  
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

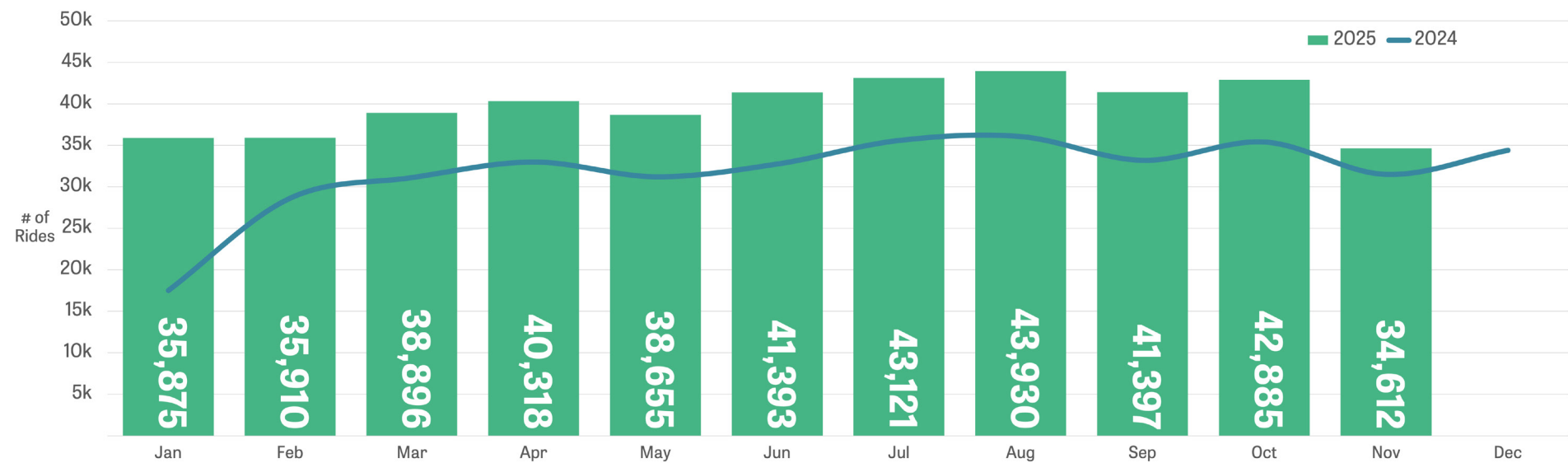


1 - Measurements made at North Park St NE Bridge  
2 - Definitions provided by United States Geological Survey (USGS)  
3 - FNU = Formazin nephelometric units

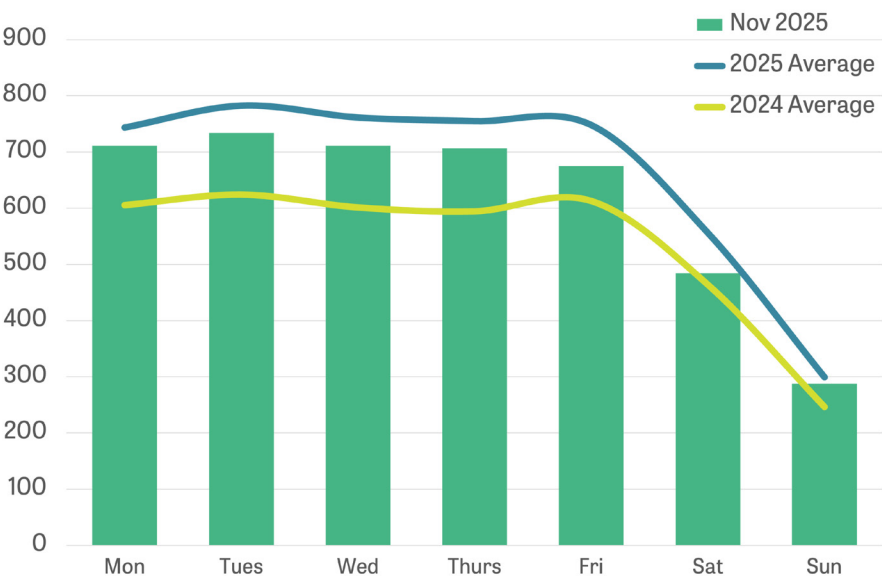
Gaps indicate missing data.  
Data partner & source: USGS interpreted by DGRI.  
Learn more at <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis>



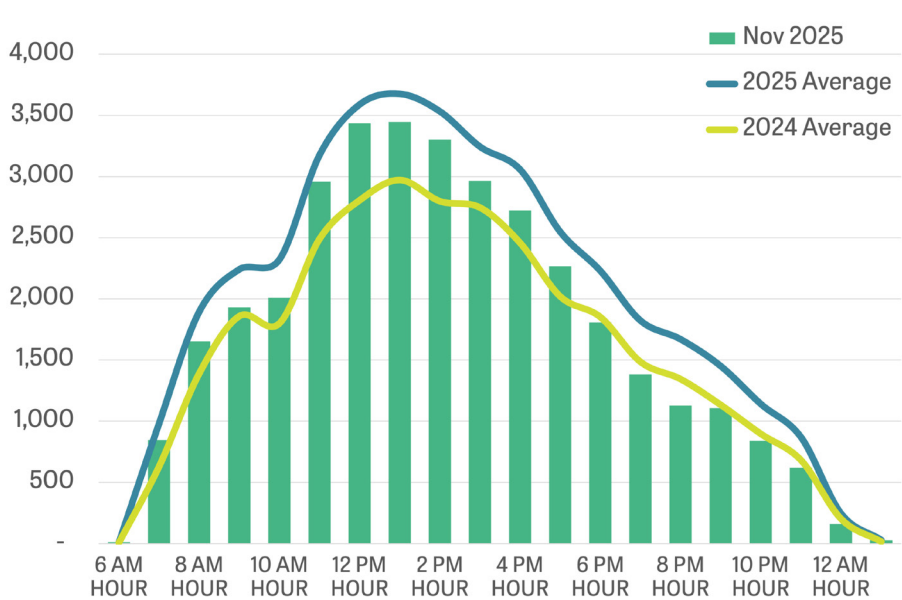
DASH Circulator ridership decreased -19% in Nov 2025 vs. Oct 2025; +10% vs. Nov 2024; -41% vs. Nov 2019



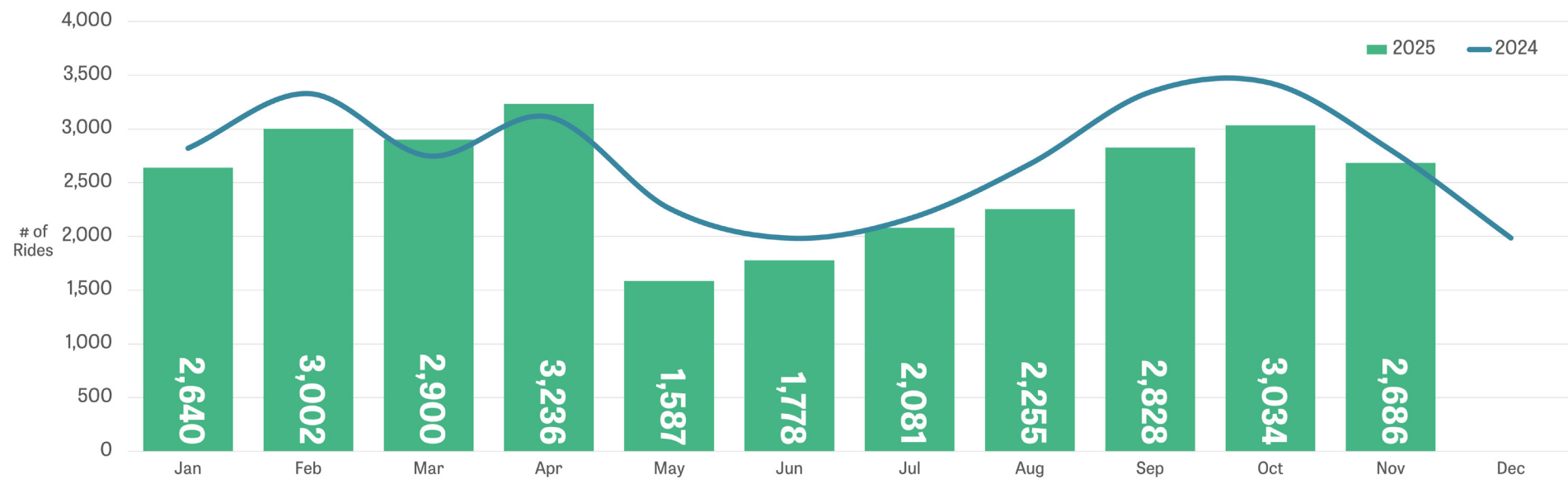
Sunday DASH Circulator ridership increased +42% in Nov 2025 vs. Nov 2024



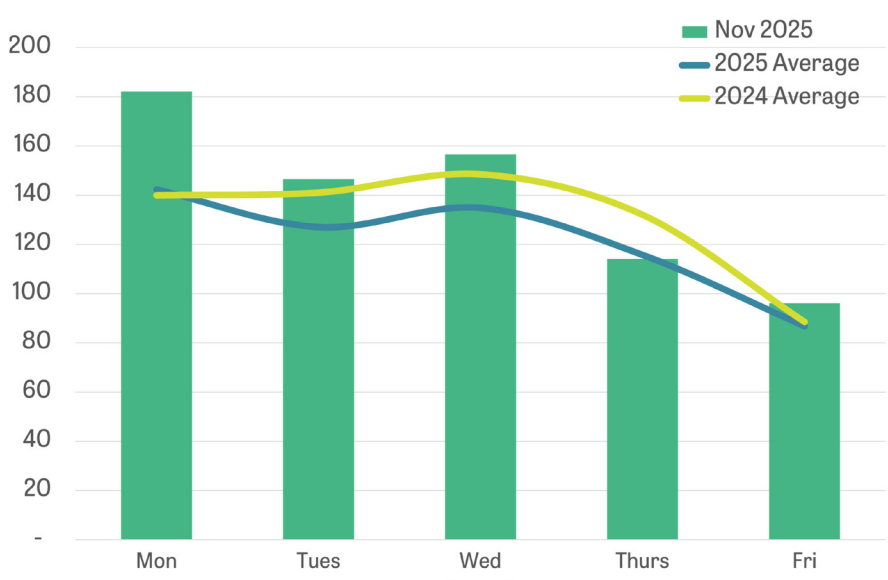
34% of DASH Circulator ridership occurred before noon in November



DASH WORK ridership decreased -11% in Nov 2025 vs. Oct 2025; -4% vs. Nov 2024



Sunday DASH WORK ridership increased +36% in Nov 2025 vs. Nov 2024



34% of DASH WORK ridership in November occurred between 7 AM - 9 AM

