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AGENDA

DGRI BOARD OF ADVISORS



Board Members:

Stephanie Adams • Monica App • Rick Baker • Shaun Biel • Mayor Rosalynn Bliss • Mandy Bolter • Wayman Britt • Kayem Dunn • Jorge Gonzalez • Kristian Grant • Brian Harris • Bob Herr • Nikos Monoyios • Jon Nunn • Doug Small • Eddie Tadlock • Mark Washington • Rick Winn

February 24, 2021 10:30a
Microsoft Teams [Virtual](#) Meeting

- | | | |
|---|-----------|--------|
| 1. Call to Order (10:30) | | Harris |
| 2. Approve Minutes from November 23, 2020 (10:31)
(enclosed) | Motion | Harris |
| 3. 2021 Alliance Slate Approval (10:35)
(enclosed) | Motion | Kelly |
| 4. River Governance Recommendations (10:45)
(enclosed) | Motion | Guy |
| 5. FY2021 Priority Updates (10:55)
(enclosed) | Info Item | Staff |
| 1. Downtown Retail | | |
| 2. Homeless Outreach Update | | |
| 3. World of Winter | | |
| 6. President & CEO Report (11:45) | Info Item | Kelly |
| 7. Old Business | | |
| 8. New Business | | |
| 9. Public Comment | | |
| 10. Adjournment | | |



Board of Advisors Meeting

Nov 23, 2020

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m. by Chair Brian Harris.

Attendance:

Present: Monica App, Mandy Bolter, Jorge Gonzalez, Wayman Britt, Birgit Klohs, Rick Baker, Brian Harris, Bob Herr, Nikos Monoyios, Doug Small, and Rick Winn.

Absent: Shaun Biel, Stephanie Adams, Mayor Rosalynn Bliss, Kayem Dunn, Kristian Grant, John Nunn, Eddie Tadlock, and Mark Washington

Others Present: Tim Kelly (President & CEO), Amanda Sloan (Recording Secretary), Dick Wendt and Jessica Wood (Legal Counsel), Marion Bonneaux, Melvin Eledge, Mark Miller, Annamarie Buller, Kim Van Driel and Andy Guy (DGRI), Patrick Doherty, Chris Leinberger, Mark Mykelby, and Eric DeLong.

2. Approve Minutes from September 21, 2020
Motion: Mr. Britt, supported by Ms. Klohs, moved to approve September 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Economics of Place Presentation
Mr. Kelly introduced Chris Leinberger to present an update on the Economics of Place Assessment being completed. Mr. Leinberger stated the area of focus (Downtown) is generating remarkable positive surplus to Grand Rapids and a model will be available in the next few months to help craft public policy by providing possible financial and social outcomes based on specific scenarios.

Mr. Leinberger presented a form/function matrix describing two economic functions and two land use forms creating 4 types of neighborhoods: Type I: Walkup (regionally significant walkable urban), Type II: Neighborhood (local serving and walkable), Type III: Drive-In (regionally significant drivable), and Type IV: Sub-Division (local serving sub-urban and rural). He noted about 3% of GR is Type I, 16% is Type II, 22% is Type III, and the remaining 60% is Type IV with the bulk of wealth being generated in regionally significant places (Type I and Type III). The Places Platform team evaluated and inventoried each of 67 unique places in the metropolitan area and found that Type I holds the majority of hotel and office market value. Type III contains the majority of industrial and the highest proportion of retail market value while Type IV contains the majority of single-family homes and the largest portion of real estate market value for the city. Mr. Leinberger then presented the real estate valuation & market share performance by form/function type in 2006-2009 and 2010-2019 noting Type I grew market share 2.5% faster than base in both of these instances.

The City of Grand Rapids generates \$9.4 billion in Gross Regional Product (GRP) annually, with \$3.2 billion generated from Type I and over \$4 billion from Type III neighborhoods due to their regional significance. Mr. Leinberger explained the net fiscal impact (the difference between generated revenues and the infrastructure and service costs associated with different development patterns) and noted the costs per person decrease with increased density. In Grand Rapids, Type I outperforms the others with a \$5 Million net profit while Type IV is being subsidized by other land use types. Mr. Leinberger highlighted a number of places that generate a surplus: Downtown (\$32 million), Heartside (\$10 million), Westside and Southtown corridor while The Northend neighborhood requires a slight subsidy.

Mr. Leinberger then presented the Social equity impact, sharing maps that display how much households are spending on housing and transportation (1st and 2nd highest household spending items). For someone earning 80% of the area median income, they would need to spend upwards of 80% of their income to live in the favored quarter. On the other hand, a great investment opportunity is found to the South (as it is a walkable urban neighborhood and gaining market share as moderately priced real estate). Displacement pressure which will be a challenge in that area in the future.

Mr. Leinberger presented future scenarios of net fiscal impact from new growth in the city, versus continued sprawl, noting a net increase of \$144 million could be created over 20 years with the conversion of drivable suburban places to urban walkable places, as an example. He stated many scenarios can be input into this model for pertinent data projections and he is hopeful this tool provides solid data to inform decision making and determine the optimal fiscal impact and social equity enhancements throughout the city. This platform includes dynamic support tools to allow place management organizations (such as DGRI) to monitor, assess, and manage economic, social equity, and public health investment performance but ultimately could be expanded to include potential civic initiatives throughout the county.

Ms. Bolter left the meeting.

4. 2021 Meeting Schedule

Motion: Mr. Small, supported by Mr. Winn, moved to approve the DGRI Board of Advisors meeting schedule as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

5. DGRI Lease Extension

Mr. Kelly stated given the current environment, we chose not to make any long-term decisions about our office space and instead will request an extension on the lease of our current space. This will be a month-to-month lease, at a 2% rate increase, and require a 90-day termination notice but will allow us to evaluate our needs as we think about office space long term.

Motion: Ms. Kohls, supported by Mr. Herr, moved to approve the terms of an amendment to the existing lease agreement with Federal Square Building, to be executed by the Board Chair, for a period of 1 year (or less with 90 days' notice) at a rate of \$8,138.19 per month. Motion carried unanimously.

6. 501c3 Application

Mr. Kelly stated DGRI has missed several opportunities for grants this year and to support the work we are doing we would like to move forward with a 501c3 application submission. There will be an additional annual federal reporting form, but the benefits are expected to outweigh the added expense and filing requirements.

Motion: Mr. Herr, supported by Mr. Winn, moved to authorize the DGRI President and CEO to work with legal counsel and the Executive Committee to finalize the application and materials to transition the organization to a 501 (c)(3). Motion carried unanimously.

7. FY2021 Priority Updates

Mr. Guy provided an update on River Governance and other river related projects and programs. He stated White Water continues to progress through environmental evaluation with the State as we advance corridor projects in collaboration with the City such as river trail repairs, public access at Fish Ladder Park, Ah Nab Awen Park redesign and implementation, and Lyon Square redesign. We continue to facilitate the process to establish a long-term governance strategy and organizational structure to develop, maintain, and sustain these public assets associated with the reactivation and revitalization of the corridor. Community outreach will continue as the organizational leadership committee defines the mission, vision, and purpose statements for a new (non-profit) entity. A more formal recommendation will be presented in February in addition to a benefits analysis of the first phase of river construction and activation. In the meantime, activation along the river is ramping up at 555 Monroe (the Skate Park), on the Blue Bridge and at Coldbrook as we experiment programming to use these spaces in new ways. Mr. Guy mentioned a memo previously shared that lists dozens of river revitalization projects currently in process and indicated the importance this holds; many different organizations and entities are working together to bring the community's vision to fruition which further cements the need for cultivating an integrated and collaborative approach to ensure we are not missing any opportunities. Mr. Harris asked if there is a public

plan to provide updates on our progress. Mr. Guy stated we may not be there yet, but this is certainly a duty this new organization could take on in the first or second quarter of next year. Mr. Gonzales prompted Mr. Guy to discuss the equity subcommittee on the project. Mr. Guy shared that everyone on the committee agrees that equity and inclusion, particularly how it relates to economic opportunity, is very important and we are in process of developing an equity framework to hold ourselves accountable to that.

Mr. Miller provided an overview of the Social Zone program. Over the summer, 203 total barricades were placed to provide 48,000 sq ft of space, increasing outdoor seating by 50%. Amenities provided to these zones included 240 tables, 800 chairs, 76 umbrellas, and 111 planters with 148 hours of pop-up performances. He noted 36% of ground floor space downtown is the food/beverage industry, the second largest employer of our downtown. The Winter Ready Grant program was introduced to provide support to these businesses looking to provide outdoor seating during colder months as the pandemic restrictions prevent them from operating indoors. Since the announcement of this grant program, DGRI staff has communicated with 25 businesses on permitting, building, and supplying heaters and shelters. Ms. Klohs asked if we are marketing these social zones throughout the winter. Mr. Kelly stated yes these will be promoted through our social media outlets and Experience GR. Mr. Harris suggested leveraging partners to widen the distribution of the DNN and Downtown Business newsletters.

Ms. VanDriel provided a recap of World of Winter 2020 and noted this year World of Winter will focus on placemaking instead of events. Tumbleweeds and Grasses will be installed on the Blue Bridge, Hybycozo's installations including a custom piece will be placed at Ah Nab Awen Park, and Impulse by CREOS will be placed at 555 Monroe. Programming such as pop-up performances, giving hearts, ice games, fire pits, as well as Window Wonderland, and Valent-Ice will supplement these art installations throughout downtown. Additional programming such as walking tours and snow shoeing is to be determined based on pandemic restrictions.

8. President & CEO Report

Mr. Kelly noted the DID reauthorization process kicked off a few weeks ago and winter lights are currently being installed downtown. He recognized Birgit Kohls as serving in her last meeting on the Board. Appreciation shared all around.

9. Old/New Business

Mr. Monoyios shared that a conversation with Alliance chairs took place and communication will continue in order to align discussions and streamline outputs moving forward.

10. Public Comment

None

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 24, 2021

TO: DGRI Board of Advisors

FROM: Tim Kelly, AICP
DGRI President & CEO

SUBJECT: **Item #3 - 2021 Alliance Overview and Appointments**

On October 24th, 2013, the DGRI Board of Advisors (Board) approved the initial seating of the DGRI Alliances (Alliances) as a part of the new organizational structure. The three initial Alliances – Investment, Livability and Vibrancy - were designed to present opportunities for in-depth community engagement, and to create leadership development opportunities for both DGRI staff and community volunteers. In total, the Board has gone on to appoint six Alliance slates with more than 200 volunteers to serve within the organization.

With the adoption of GR Forward by the City Commission in December 2015, the goals for Downtown were memorialized, and the mission for DGRI was more clearly focused. To that end, in 2017 the Board approved a reconstitution of the Alliance structure to be aligned with 5 key goals from GR Forward. The main charge of each Alliance is to ensure the resources managed by DGRI are being deployed to implement the vision established by the community. As with the previous model, DGRI staff and leadership developed and continue to deploy a thoughtful, partnership-oriented outreach program to assist in making the Alliances both inclusionary and representative of the expertise needed to make insightful recommendations.

For 2021, the recommended slate includes 90 total members, 8 of which are new to the organization. In keeping with DGRI performance measures, the new slate continues the commitment to achieving representative diversity according to the factors considered, including age, sexual orientation, race, gender, and places where individuals live and work. The table and rosters below have been updated to reflect the proposed change and are recommended for the Boards approval. Lastly, existing Alliance members were asked to complete a survey to indicated their experience serving this year and to provide feedback on opportunities for improvement. A summary of that information is also attached.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the amended 2021 DGRI Alliance slates as recommended.

Alliance Demographic Summary 2015 – 2021

AGE	City-wide	DGRI 2015	DGRI 2016	DGRI 2017	DGRI 2019	DGRI 2020	DGRI 2021
20-24	10%	0%	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%
25-34	19%	21%	38%	43%	47%	35%	37%
35-44	10%	41%	32%	30%	32%	43%	41%
45-54	10%	30%	21%	11%	8%	9%	9%
55+	11%	8%	6%	14%	10%	9%	9%
GENDER							
Male	49%	71%	58%	50%	46%	51%	50%
Female	51%	29%	42%	50%	54%	49%	50%
ORIENTATION							
Heterosexual	96.20%	97%	92%	94%	90%	90%	91%
LGBT	3.8%*	3%	8%	6%	10%	10%	9%
RACE							
Asian	2%	3%	4%	4%	4%	2%	2%
African American	19%	19%	21%	16%	14%	14%	14%
Hispanic or Latino	16%	2%	6%	10%	8%	8%	8%
White	68%	76%	69%	65%	70%	74%	72%
Mixed Race	3%	-	-	5%	4%	2%	3%
TOTAL MEMBERS	-	63	78	85	93	93	90

*Source: Movement Advanced Project

For profit interests: 40 privately owned companies represented

Not-for-profit interests: 34 community not-for-profit organizations represented

Government interests: 14 representatives of government represented, including 9 from the City of Grand Rapids

Academic interests: 2 educational institutions represented

Summary of Roster Amendments

Resignations:

- Goal 1 – Tom Hoving (Retired)
- Goal 1 – Tyler Kanczuzewski (Inovateus Solar)
- Goal 3 – James Botts (Retired)
- Goal 3 – Dave Riley (The Right Place)
- Goal 3 – Tre Conner (Grand Rapids Drive)
- Goal 5 – Thomas Pierce (GR Pride Center)
- Goal 5 – Nick Nortier (Old Growth Creative)

Additions:

- Goal 2 – Mark Tangen (Primerica)
- Goal 2 – Jacey Shachter (Metric Structures)
- Goal 2 – Kathy Steindler (Amway)
- Goal 2 – Josh Lunger (GR Area Chamber)
- Goal 3 – Tim Mroz (The Right Place)
- Goal 4 – Addison Wanlass (SPARK)
- Goal 4 – Ben Knapp (Accrisure)
- Goal 5 – Katie Moore (Art Prize)

Goal 1 Alliance: Restore the River and Reconnect the City

	First Name	Last Name	Employer
1	Laura	Cleypool	City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation
2	Joe	Elliot	RDV Corporation
3	Lindsey	Gadbois	Tower Pinkster
4	Rachel	Hood	Chase Park Grants
5	Janet	Korn	Experience Grand Rapids
6	Jacob	Kulhanek	Christman
7	Ted	Lott	Lott3Metz Architecture
8	Traci	Montgomery	Bissell
9	Mark	Roys	CSM Group
10	Eddie	Tadlock	ASM Global
11	Matt	Chapman	GR White Water
12	Corinne	Farleigh	Tesla Engineering / Env'd Protection
13	Nolan	Miller	Progressive AE
14	Maleah	Beatty	Williams & Works
15	Issac	Degraaf	Dwelling Place
16	Elyse	Mathos	Spectrum Health Foundation
17	Sergio	Reyes	Latino Community Coalition

Goal 2 Alliance: Toward a Diverse and Vibrant Downtown Neighborhood

	First Name	Last Name	Employer
1	Monica	App	Rockford Construction
2	Abby	Cribbs	May Group Realtors & REMAX of GR
3	Sarah	Green	The Rapid
4	Katy	Hallgren	RJM Design
5	Daniel	Kvamme	City of Grand Rapids
6	Josh	Lunger	Grand Rapids Area Chamber
7	Latesha	Lipscomb	Amplify GR
8	Danielle	Rowland	Danielle Rowland State Farm
9	Jacey	Schacter	Metric Structures
10	Jenn	Schaub	Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids
11	Latrisha	Sosebee	Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids
12	Kathy	Steindler	Amway
13	Mark	Tangen	Primerica
14	Aaron	Terpstra	Mobile GR Parking Services

Goal 3 Alliance: A 21st Century Mobility Strategy

	First Name	Last Name	Employer
1	Kristin	Bennett	City of Grand Rapids
2	Zac	Bosma	Christman
3	Meegan	Joyce	The Rapid
4	Ryan	Kilpatrick	Housing Next
5	Nikos	Monoyios	The Rapid
6	Kara	Peltier	KCAD of Ferris State University
7	Andrew	Queenan	Pure Architects
8	Breese	Stam	City of Grand Rapids
9	Sulin	Kotowicz	Viridis Design Group
10	Hank	Kelley	City of Grand Rapids
11	Dustin	Corr	Nederveld
12	Maxwell	Dillivan	The Rapid
13	Johanna	Jelks	She Rides Her Own Way
14	Tim	Mroz	The Right Place

Goal 4 Alliance: Expand Downtown Economic Opportunity

	First Name	Last Name	Employer
1	Ryan	Bolhuis	Downtown Market
2	Alex	Caceres	United Bank
3	Brent	Case	The Right Place

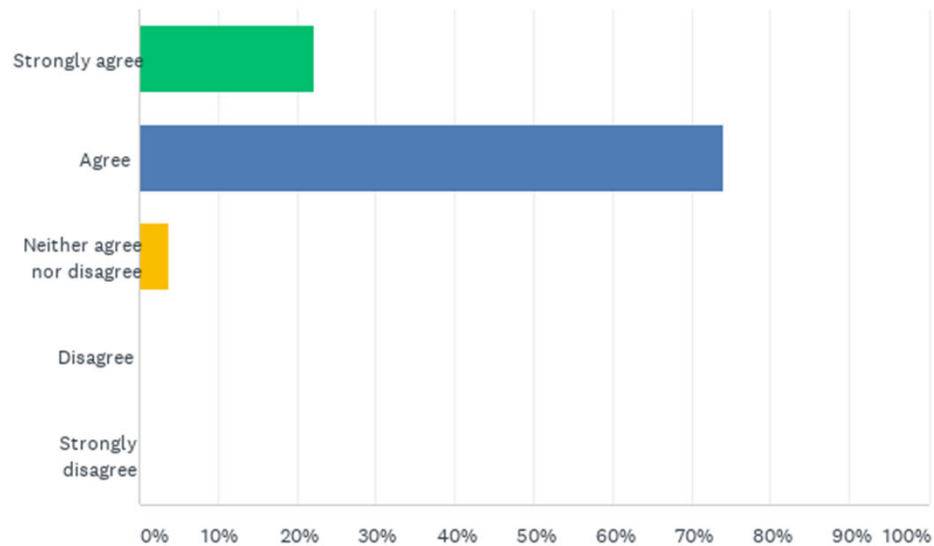
4	Omar	Cuevas	Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
5	Jorge	Gonzalez	Start Garden
6	John	Hendershot	Rende Progress Capital
7	AJ	Hills	City of Grand Rapids
8	Caleb	Hollier	Gill Industries
9	Heather	Ibrahim	Dwelling Place
10	Alice	Jasper	Local First
11	Ana	Jose	Hispanic Chamber
12	Jono	Klooster	City of Grand Rapids
13	Ben	Knapp	Accrisure
14	Alysha	Lach White	Little Space Studios
15	Rick	Muschiana	Sovengard
16	Ingrid	Miller	Uptown CIA
17	Attah	Obande	Spring GR
18	Caylie	Peet	Rockford Construction Property Management
19	Tyler	Peterson	Opportunity Resource Fund
20	Kareem	Scales	New York Life
21	Leah	Schreiber	Vault of Midnight
22	Scott	Stenstrom	Fifth Third
23	Addison	Wanlass	SPARK
24	Danielle	Williams	Amplify GR
25	Brianna	Vasques de Pereira	Kent School Services Network

Goal 5 Alliance: Create a Welcoming and Inclusive Downtown

	First Name	Last Name	Employer
1	Stephanie	Adams	Friends of GR Parks
2	Adrienne	Brown-Reasner	Grand Rapids Children's Museum
3	Emily	Evers	Artists Creating Together
4	Kate	Burke	Downtown Market
5	Lisa	Knight	Grand Rapids Urban League
6	Chad	LeRoux	AHC+Hospitality
7	Katie	Moore	Art Prize
8	Amelea	Gritter	Common Notice
9	Evette	Pittman	City of Grand Rapids
10	Reb	Roberts	Sanctuary Folk Art
11	Eddie	Tadlock	ASM Global
12	Derek	Call	ArtPrize
13	Hannah	Berry	Lions & Rabbits
14	Katherine	Williams	UICA
15	Catherine	Zietse	City of Grand Rapids Parks Dept.
16	Kyle	DeGroff	BarFly Ventures, LLC
17	Julio	Cano	Spectrum
18	Rachel	McKay	GR Children's Museum

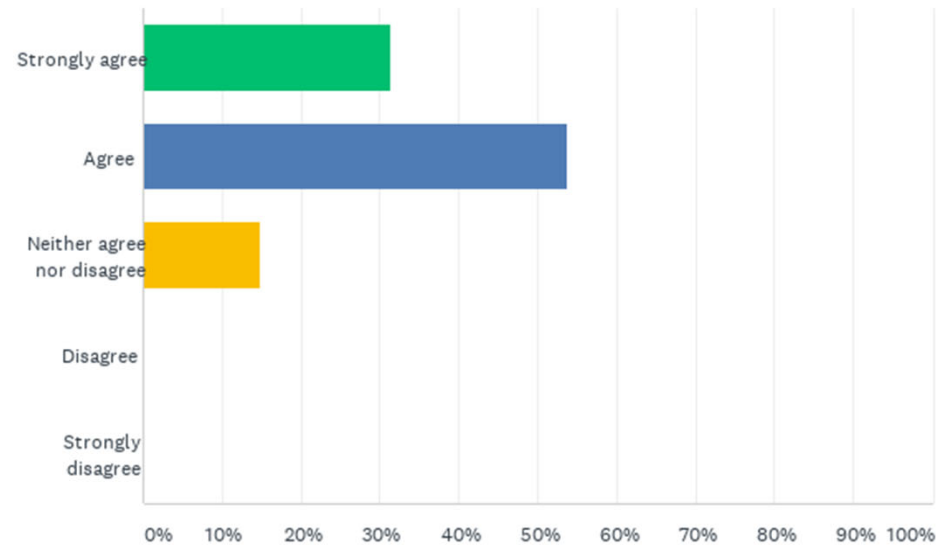
19	Maddie	Schaub	Disability Advocates of Kent County
20	Valerie	Wahna	VR Designs

Q18 I am clear about my expectations and role as an Alliance Member



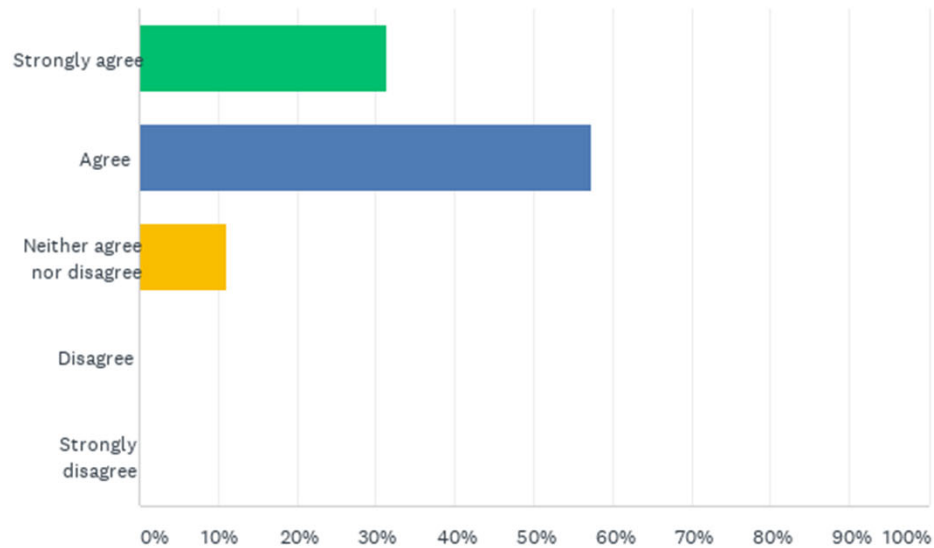
- Strongly Agree (22%)
- Agree (74%)
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree (4%)

Q19 DGRI staff has provided adequate information, training, and insight needed to assist me in my role as an Alliance member.



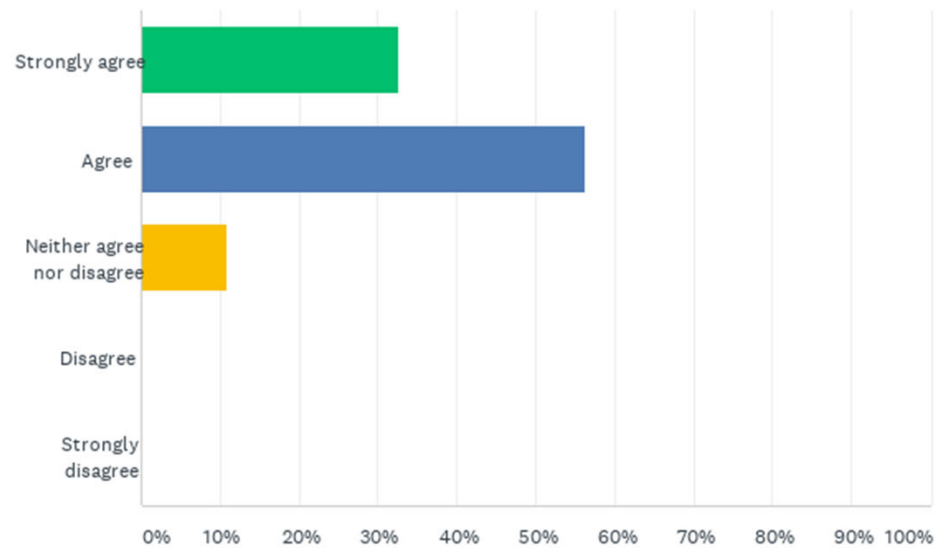
- Strongly Agree (31%)
- Agree (53%)
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree (16%)

Q20 I believe that my service as an Alliance member is time well spent.



- Strongly Agree (31%)
- Agree (57%)
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree (12%)

Q21 I believe that DGRI values my contribution to the organization.



- Strongly Agree (33%)
- Agree (55%)
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree (12%)

- If you could make one improvement to the Alliances for 2021 what would it be?
 1. More cross Alliance collaborations (23%)
 2. Return to in person meetings (16%)
 3. Clarity of roles and annual goals (14%)
 4. Stronger agendas and more lead time on information at meetings (9%)
 5. Diversity in all forms in Alliance leadership (7%)
 6. More site visits and field trips (4%)
 7. Opportunities to meet other Alliance members socially (4%)
 8. Other
 - Involvement in development master planning and project review (possibly the job of another alliance)
 - Maybe a bit more insight to the overall City's goals for future projects.
 - I would limit the voice that city staff has. The Alliances are intended as citizen advocacy and to present items for consideration to the city. Far too often, city staff is very vocal in meetings to the point citizens feel like they cannot contribute.
 - It would be very helpful for me if you might offer meetings at varying times, or earlier in the day.
 - Look for opportunities to make the general public aware of the good work of the Alliances.
 - An "over the years overview" to show the impact of the of each alliance. This would especially be helpful in recruitment
 - Keep giving us homework! I love what DGRI does and would love to do more to support the work. I am more than willing to volunteer at events/with setup, etc.
 - I think more frequent updates on the status of the work would be nice. I know many things just take time and COVID has caused even more delays, but I feel like I don't have a strong sense of what DGRI is doing on a daily/weekly basis regarding the alliance.

Additional feedback

- I feel there is too much involvement among City staff members.
- Excellent leadership and great feedback!
- The strong support of DGRI Staff contributes to success.
- Sometimes it's unclear about what is expected of the committees.
- I enjoy being part of this group and learning about the fantastic projects that DGRI has taken on.
- Well organized and the group is very enthusiastic about the work.
- I think there's an opportunity to maintain momentum month to month.
- I really appreciate the creative minds around the table, and enjoy meetings that have a good mix of staff updates with brainstorming and ideation from members.
- Understanding the difference between diversity, inclusion, and equity across all protected classes (race, sex, age, national origin, disability, etc.) in the alliances.
- With all of the conversations happening around the river, it doesn't feel like the voice of the goal 1 alliance is really needed.
- How do we make them more action oriented?
- I love DGRI; I wish our board were more formal than it is for effective outcome purposes.
- I appreciate all the efforts DGRI puts into the alliance's work.
- I think diverse representation from individuals who live/work in the boundary area is vital. I think DGRI makes it a priority to do that and hope that their outreach is working.
- I have seen the Goal 5 alliance of which I am a member totally step up and above the challenges that have come to ours and all communities.
- To the benefit of our community the Goal 5 alliance has expanded public art and adapted events to bring much needed vibrancy to a somewhat restricted city environment. The variety activities planned are exceptionally well promoted and diverse in the approach to engaging and available to all of the community.
- I have really enjoyed my time serving on the Goal 5 Alliance. COVID has presented challenges with continuing meetings, hosting events, and just about everything in life. I think DGRI has done a great job adjusting and having virtual meetings.
- I think DGRI has done a great job keeping the alliances moving throughout the pandemic and to be honest, I really like the digital format, it saves a ton of time. I do however miss seeing people in person and being able to have the personal connection, but unfortunately that is beyond our control. I hope that Alliance meetings continue in this format and I'm looking forward to seeing what DGRI accomplishes in 2021!
- Think the staff does a great job
- I truly enjoy being on this Alliance and am always really happy when schedules align and I can participate. It was very fun to be part of the placemaking grants committee and I would be eager to participate in other such activities. I am very proud to be a part of this dynamic group of community leaders!
- Formation of the DGRI Alliances was a great way to engage the public in placemaking in Grand Rapids.



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 18, 2021
TO: DGRI Board of Advisors
FROM: Andy Guy, Chief Outcomes Officer
RE: Grand River Corridor Governance Organizing

This memo recommends a governance model to develop, manage, program and maintain the public capital assets associated with the revitalization and activation of the Grand River Corridor from Riverside to Millennium Parks.

When Grand Rapids Whitewater (GRWW) and the City of Grand Rapids complete their work, a 2+ mile reach of the Grand River will emerge as a renewed social, economic and environmental asset flowing through the urban core of Kent County.

The transformation of the *waterway* will catalyze significant new community building opportunities along the *waterfront*.

Conceptual community planning to date has identified more than two dozen “opportunities sites” that can rise to higher and better use as much-needed housing, business and public recreational space. Community partners already have begun organizing for major improvements on several sites.

The full vision also involves building out the river edge “trail” to link Downtown, the opportunity sites and existing amenities such as Millennium and Riverside Parks ultimately transforming this currently isolated, industrialized and underutilized reach of river into an active and vibrant 5-mile stretch of Grand River greenway.

Similar to public facilities such as Van Andel Arena, DeVos Place Convention Center or Meijer Gardens, the joined public assets in this future rejuvenated corridor – the whitewater and restored waterway, trail and expanded green space – has powerful potential to become, not just a major new attraction for visitors to our region, but also an important driver of local growth towards an increasingly more livable, equitable and prosperous place for all Grand Rapidsians.

This clearly has proven the case in other forward-thinking cities with similar projects – including but certainly not limited to riverfronts in Memphis, Denver and Detroit, the Cultural Trail in Indianapolis, and the Atlanta BeltLine.

Lessons drawn from these and other cities also affirm that – to truly be successful – these unique public facilities require special focus, expertise, partnership and management, not unlike an arena, convention center or Downtown district.

The question is how do we execute? GRWW organized specifically to lead implementation of the in-channel improvements. But once that work is complete, how does the community sustain those *waterway* improvements over time, provide accessible recreation opportunities and ensure all users are safe?

How does the community organize itself to revitalize, program, manage and maintain the *waterfront*, specifically the public trail and park spaces, and thereby reinforce and maximize the Grand Rapids Whitewater initiative and investment?

Collaboration is uniquely important. The Grand River waterfront is perhaps one of the most complicated locations to advance community building and improvement initiatives. A multitude of different property owners, institutions, organizations, stakeholders and permitting agencies have an interest in the corridor, and they all have different needs, roles, responsibilities, capacities and decision-making processes.

Deliberately and intentionally cultivating collaboration, joint effort and support is critical to bring the community's vision for the river to life and make the most of this generational opportunity.

Working together as the Organizational Leadership Committee (OLC), a diverse group of community stakeholders convened over several months to consider these governance questions and recommend an approach. Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. facilitated the process with support from the staff of partner agencies and the retained services of HR&A Advisors and Kathy Blaha Consulting.

There is consensus among the OLC that a two-pronged governance model is the most appropriate and promising approach:

- Establish a new nonprofit entity capable of serving as a backbone agency that cultivates collaboration and coordination to implement the community vision for river corridor revitalization and activation.

The NGO model should be flexible and evolve with the needs of the project, ultimately developing the partnerships, proficiency and capacity to coordinate the long-term leadership needs of the project. This includes but is not limited to visioning, strategic planning and communications; capital planning, operations and maintenance; programming and public space activation; and the long-term sustainability of the capital associated with the Project, as well as public engagement, fundraising support, equity and inclusion organizing and other stewardship services.

- Establish, on a parallel track, a Recreational Authority under Michigan law, through a partnership of Kent County, the City of Grand Rapids and perhaps other key governmental jurisdictions upstream, downstream or otherwise connected to the river recreation system.

Similar to the CAA, DDA and other successful local models, the Authority tool, among other advantages, serves as the foundation for regional coordination, public-private collaboration and greater flexibility to access multiple funding sources. The Authority also helps strike a balance between independent governance (ie the ability to define and deliver on the Project's vision) and public accountability with respect to leadership, engagement, funding and public space stewardship.

The OLC and consulting team evaluated a range of governance options, including but not limited to existing local government agencies, local nonprofits, special purpose authorities as well as best organizational practices

at similar public facilities in other communities. Agreement emerged that an independent not-for-profit entity, working in tandem with a Recreation Authority, meets the governance objects and is an appropriate model for the long-term management of the project.

With the endorsement of this governance recommendation by the river corridor revitalization partners, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc will assist the startup efforts for the next 6 – 12 months. DGRl will provide project management, mentoring and organizational support related to:

- Incorporation of the not-for-profit entity.
- Recruitment of a Board of Directors (several OLC members have agreed to continue).
- Supporting initial organizational development ie formation of committees, community advisory, etc.
- Retaining community engagement services to broaden community inclusion in the continued organizing process.
- Developing a Business and Fundraising Plan to guide the not-for-profit entity.
- Drafting an initial memorandum of understanding between the non-profit and key partner agencies.
- Developing an Equity Framework to center equity and inclusion practice in non-profit and, by extension, river corridor revitalization efforts going forward.
- Organizing and initiating a Corridor Connections Plan process to identify partnership opportunities, shape roles, define capital priorities and support implementation.
- Recruitment of key initial staff.
- Convene dialogue to further explore the potential for a Recreational Authority, which ultimately requires approval of local legislative bodies.

This recommendation builds on substantial community conversation to date. The community has invested a tremendous amount of time, talent and engagement specifically to explore potential governance models for the river, parks and recreation services more generally vis-à-vis the City's River for All Strategic Asset Management Plan (2018), the Organizational Models Work Group Report (2015) and the Kent County Multi-Jurisdictional Parks Study (2012).

This recommendation builds on this experience and aims to lay the foundation for the successful completion and long-term sustainability of the river corridor revitalization project the community has put forward.

Now is a uniquely opportune time to move forward quickly and diligently on this governance recommendation. GRWW has begun moving into the formal permitting process. The construction schedule and sequencing for in-channel and subsequent edge improvements is coming into view. And the federal government is designing a once-in-a-decade economic recovery package largely organized around infrastructure investment directly aligned with Grand River corridor priorities.

These recommended organizing and capacity-building next steps position our community to maximize the opportunity and drive transformation of the Grand River corridor over the next 5-10 years.

The following supporting process documents are available upon request:

- Organizational Leadership Committee Roster
- Grand River Governance Memo, prepared by Kathy Blaha, August 2020
- Draft Vision, Mission, Purpose & Values Statements, prepared by Kathy Blaha, December 2020
- Framework for Equitable Engagement, prepared by Sergio Cira Reyes, September 2020
- The Value of the Grand River Benefits Analysis, prepared by HR&A Consultants, February 2021
- Grand Rapids Visit Wrap Up Memo, prepared by Daniel Tellalian, September 2019



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 24, 2021

TO: DGRI Board of Advisors

FROM: Tim Kelly, AICP
DGRI President & CEO

SUBJECT: Item #5 – FY21 Priority Project Updates – Downtown Retail

Among the adopted priorities for DGRI in FY21 was completion of a retail analysis and plan for Downtown Grand Rapids. To that end, in June 2020 the DDA approved funding for an assessment to better understand COVID-19 impacts and an overview of macro trends impacting the Downtown retail environment. Once complete, this work will clarify our existing conditions and will help identify strategies to consider for achieving our goals of cultivating a thriving retail environment in Downtown.

Mike Berne from MJB Consulting has been leading this work and will be in attendance to share information from his initial analysis, including discussions with merchants, owners, brokers and others engaged in retail Downtown and the broader Grand Rapids trade area. He will also share strategies to consider for creating the thriving retail environment that has been established as a community priority.

As context for the discussion, attached here is the monthly summary report that DGRI has updated since March 2020 to track COVID impacts and to better understand activity in Downtown. MJB's presentation to the DDA from January 2021 is also attached.



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

COVID-19 Impact Report
February 9, 2021

Business Openings

2020

- ① Morning Belle (June 8)
- ② Ding Tea (June 28)
- ③ Downtown Nutrition (June 29)
- ④ Art Caribbean Fusion Cuisine (July 10)*
- ⑤ The Color Forest (July 16)*
- ⑥ Insomnia Cookies (July 21)
- ⑦ Pump House (July 23, 2020)
- ⑧ Balke P&D Gallery (August 7)
- ⑨ Alt City Beverage Downtown Market (August 20)
- ⑩ Portico & Knoop Canopy Hilton (September 8)
- ⑪ Mel Styles (September 19)*
- ⑫ Tupelo Honey (September 19)
- ⑬ Basic Bee Boutique (November 14)*
- ⑭ Purpose Training Studio (November 16)
- ⑮ GRNoir (December 4)*
- ⑯ Aggregate 136 (December 4)
- ⑰ House Rules Board Game Lounge (December 4)
- ⑱ Pack Elephant (December 10)*
- ⑲ Arktos Meadery (December 11)

2021

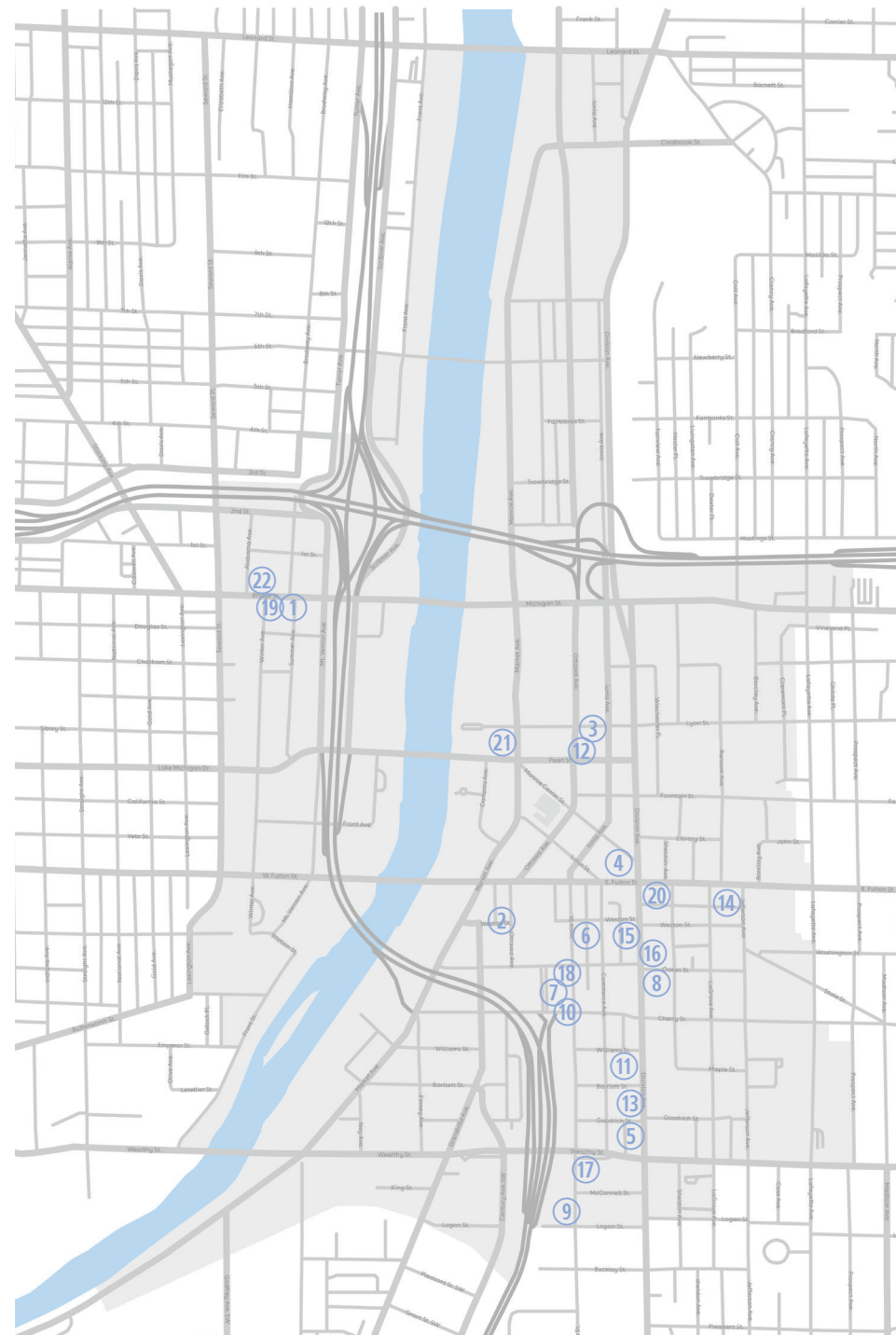
- ⑳ Poké Poké & Boba (January 19)
- ㉑ MDRD (February 2)
- ㉒ Condado Tacos (February 4)

By comparison, 28 businesses opened in the same time period in 2019-2020

23% BIPOC-owned

32% Women-owned

*received DDA Retail Incubation Grant

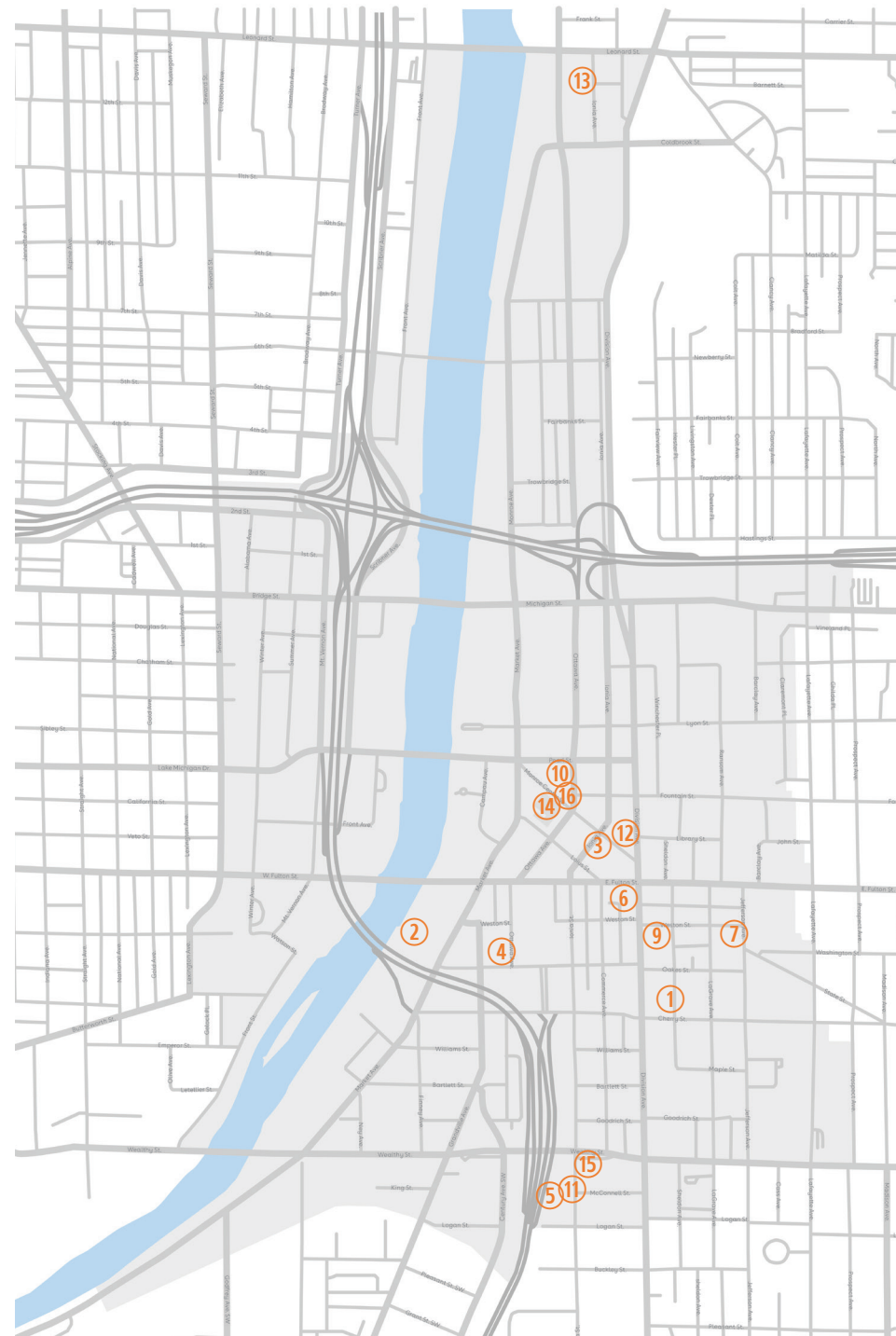


Business Closings

2020

- ① Zoey Ashwood Fine Art (May)
- ② Charley's Crab (May 15)
- ③ Grand Central Market (June 1)
- ④ The Wheelhouse (June 4)
- ⑤ Madcap Downtown Market (June 8)
- ⑥ UICA (June 17)
- ⑦ Dog Story Theatre (June 27)
- ⑧ Sloppy Joe's Snack Shack (July)
- ⑨ Bend Gallery (July)
- ⑩ Perrigo Printing (July 1)
- ⑪ Social Kitchen (July 7)
- ⑫ Gina's Boutique (August 8)
- ⑬ Sin Republic Salon (August 28)
- ⑭ GRAM Store (August 30)
- ⑮ Craft Beer Cellar (September 26)
- ⑯ The Dog Pit (December 19)

By comparison, 14 businesses closed in the same time period in 2019-2020.



Winter Ready Grant

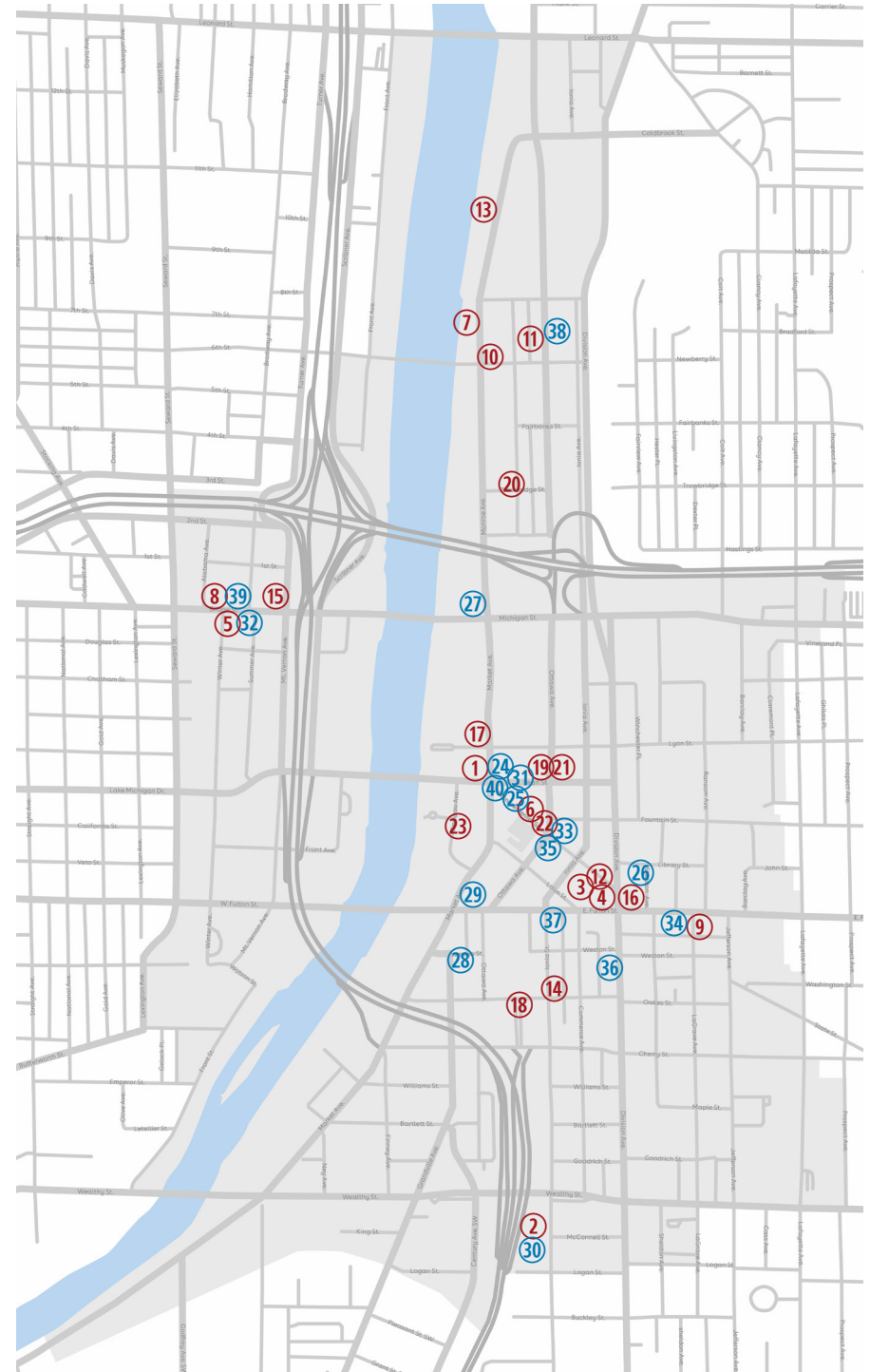
February 9, 2021

Installed

- ① Amway/Ruth's Chris/Corner Bar
- ② Aperitivo
- ③ Art Caribbean Fusion Cuisine
- ④ Brick & Porter
- ⑤ Butcher's Union
- ⑥ Cinco De Mayo
- ⑦ City Built Brewing Co.
- ⑧ Condado Tacos
- ⑨ Cottage Bar
- ⑩ Field & Fire
- ⑪ The Garage Bar
- ⑫ House of Wine
- ⑬ Linear
- ⑭ Luna Cocina
- ⑮ New Holland Knickerbocker
- ⑯ Osteria Rossa
- ⑰ Reserve Wine & Food
- ⑱ Studio Park
- ⑲ Sundance Grill & Bar
- ⑳ Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea
- ㉑ Tupelo Honey
- ㉒ Uccello's Ristorante
- ㉓ Z's Restaurant

Work in Progress

- ㉔ Ando Sushi
- ㉕ Angel's Thai Café
- ㉖ The Apartment Lounge
- ㉗ Atwater Brewing
- ㉘ Bistro Bella Vita
- ㉙ The B.O.B.
- ㉚ Downtown Market
- ㉛ Flanagan's Irish Pub
- ㉜ Jolly Pumpkin
- ㉝ Madcap
- ㉞ MeXo
- ㉟ Parsley Mediterranean
- ㊱ Rockwell Republic
- ㊲ San Chez A Tapas Bistro
- ㊳ Sandy Point Beach House
- ㊴ The Søvangård
- ㊵ Wise Men Distillery



Downtown Storefront Vacancies

There are 336 ground floor storefronts in Downtown.

There is a 21% vacancy rate (71 storefronts) as of February 3, 2021.

This equates to more than 389,820 square feet of available space with an average duration of vacancy of 2 years and 4 months.

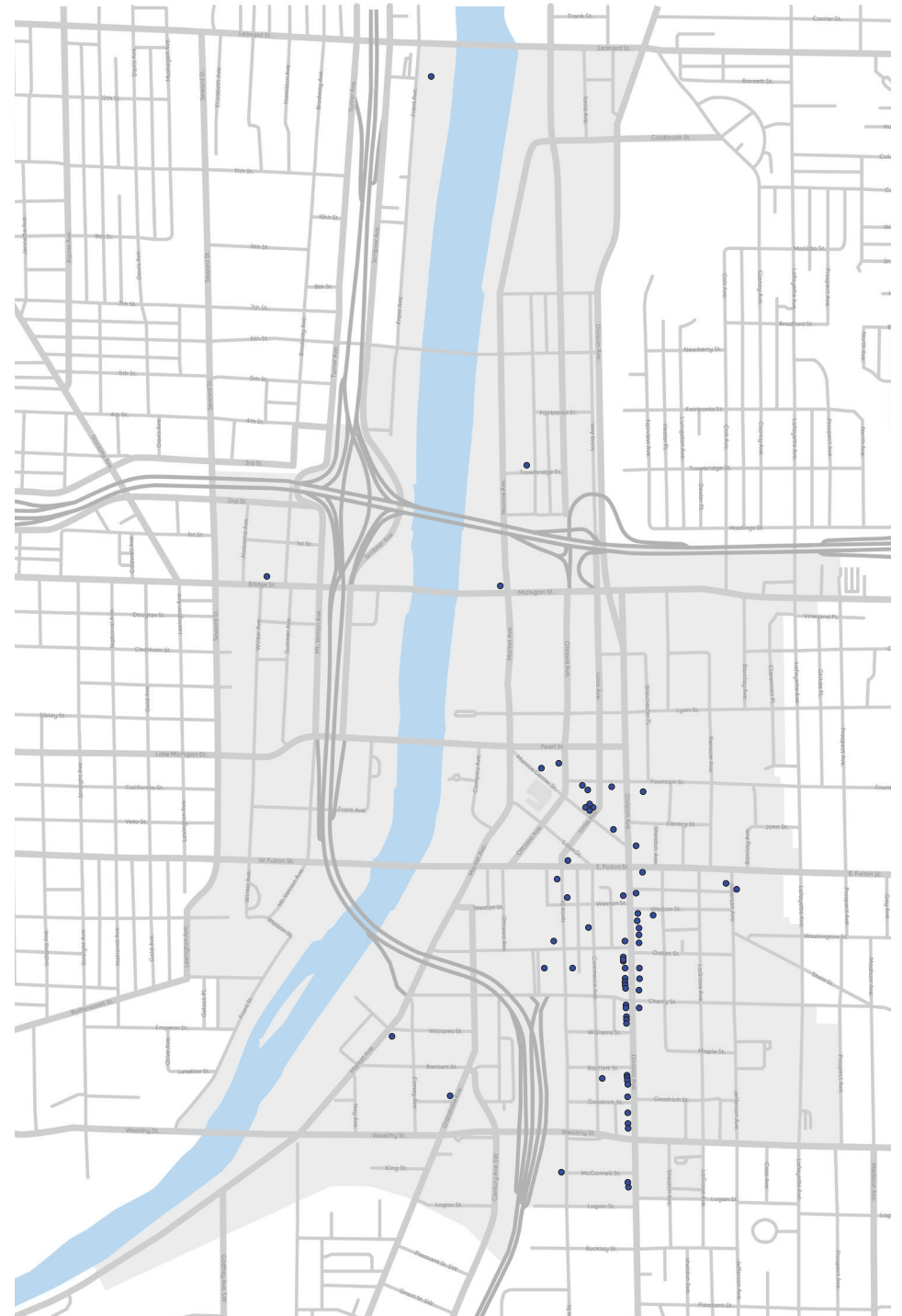
4 new storefronts have been added in the last 12 months.

449 Bridge St NW #1 (Condado Tacos @ Bridge St Lofts)

449 Bridge St NW #2 (Vacant @ Bridge St Lofts)

10 Ionia Ave NW #1 (TBA @ Residence Inn)

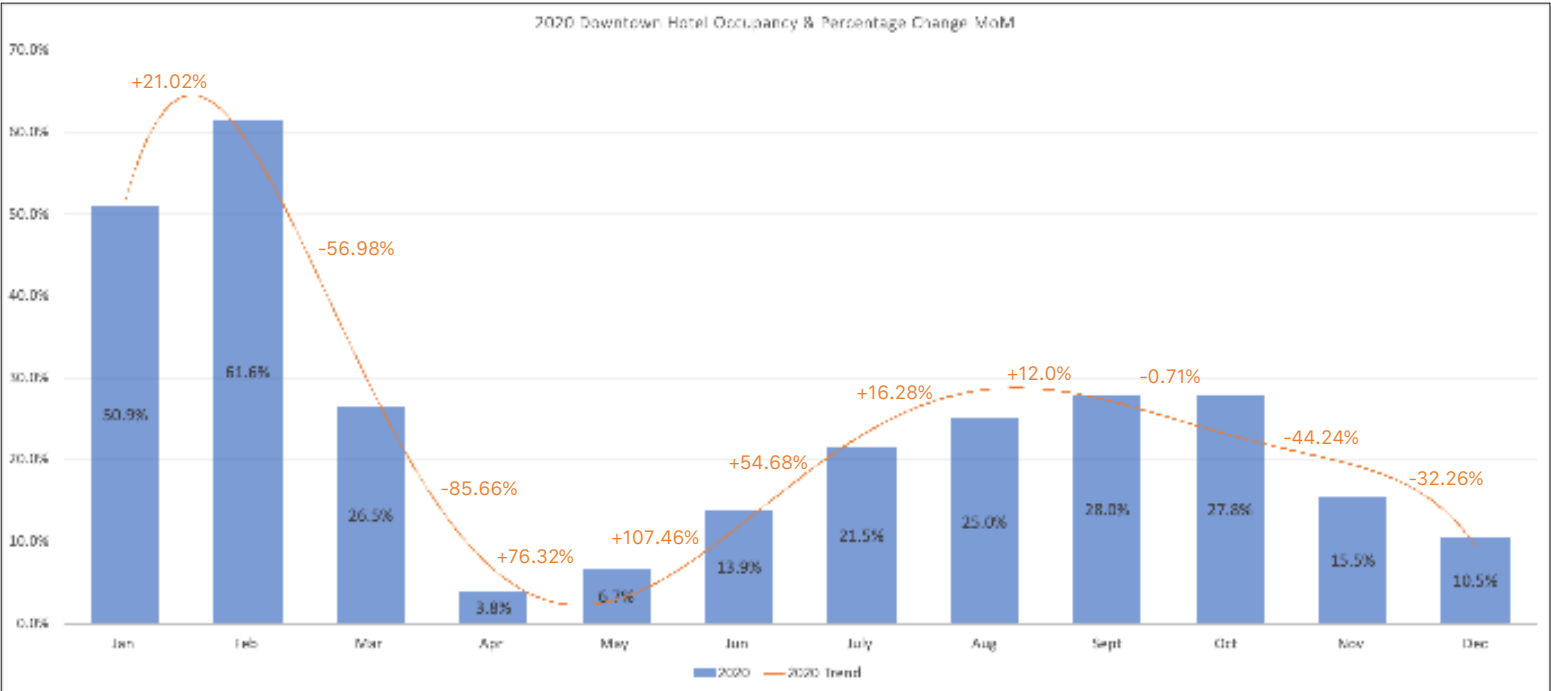
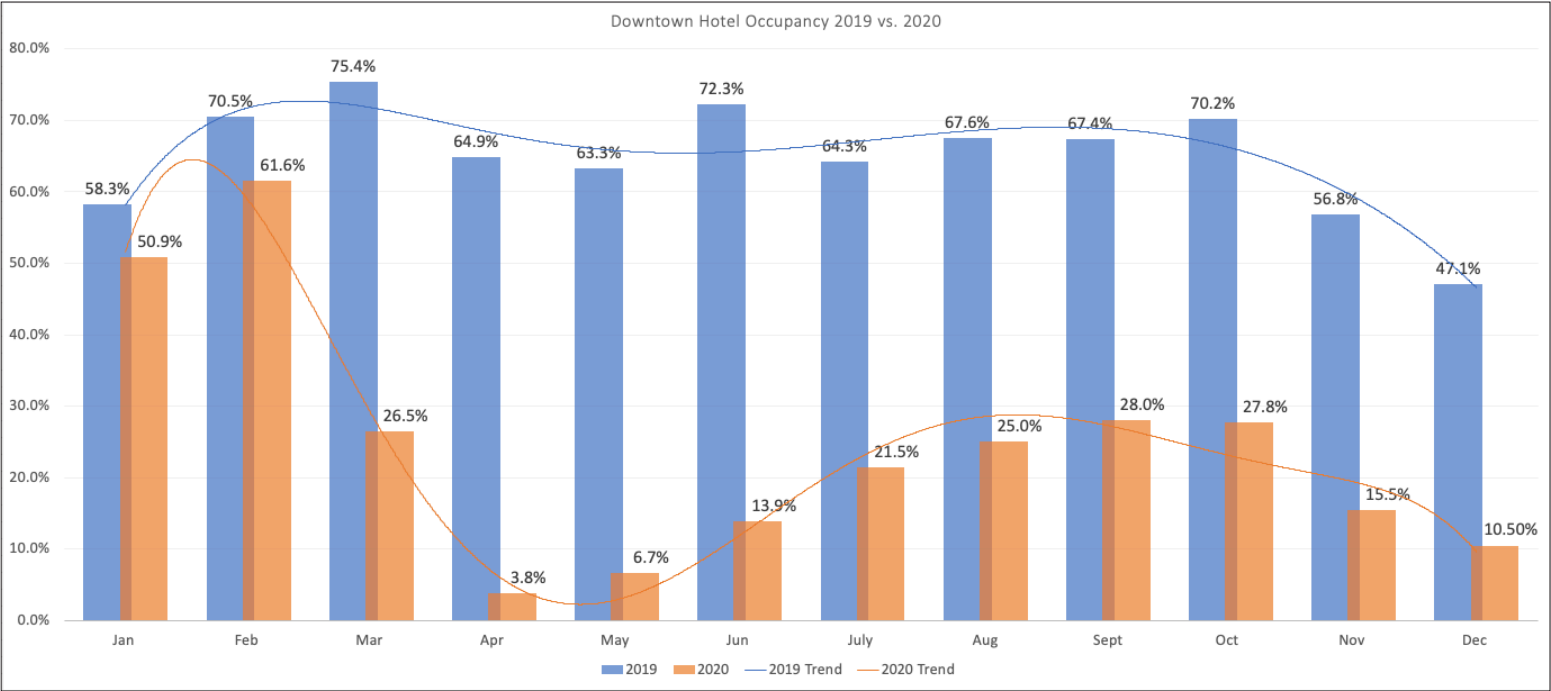
10 Ionia Ave NW #2 (TBA @ Residence Inn)



Downtown Hotel
Occupancy

Between May and September, occupancy was recovering at an average increment of 4.48% per month.

The point change between October and November in 2019 and 2020 is comparable (12.3% and 13.4%, respectively), indicating that although occupancy did decreased it decreased at the same rate in 2020 as it does in non-COVID years.



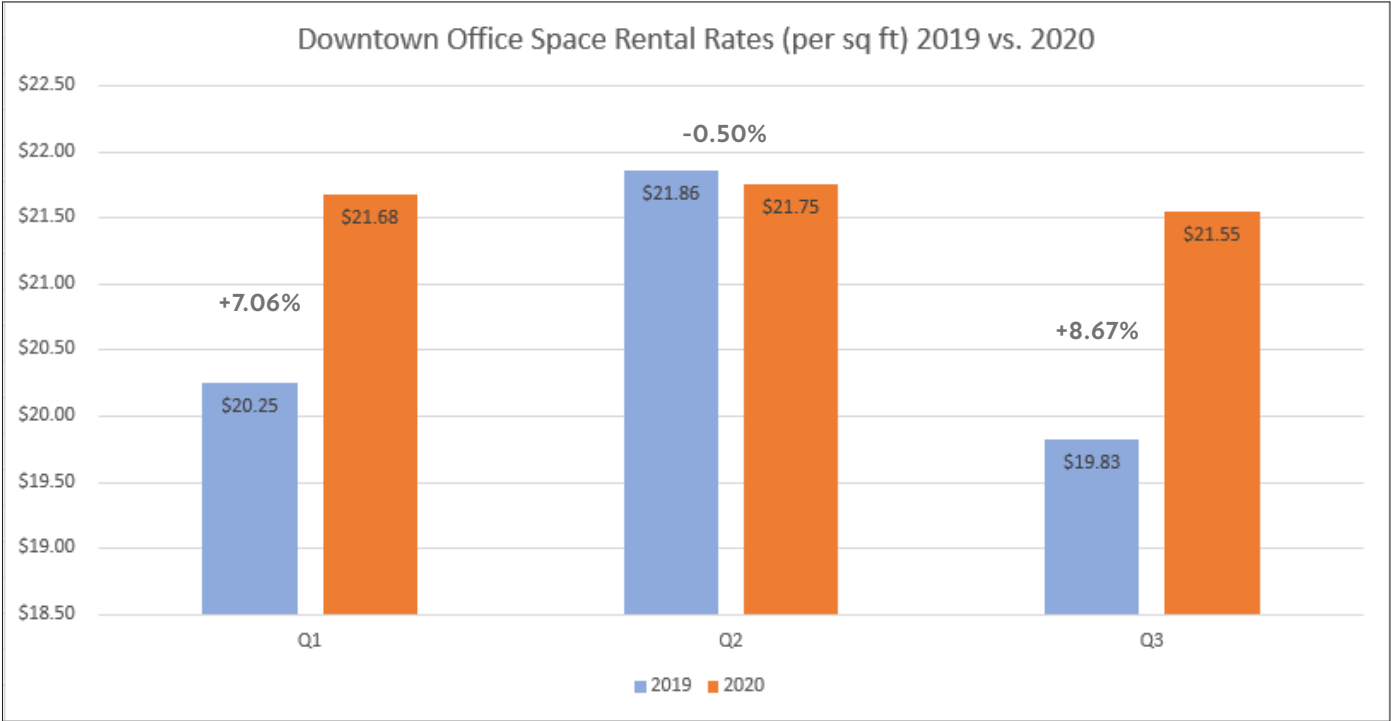
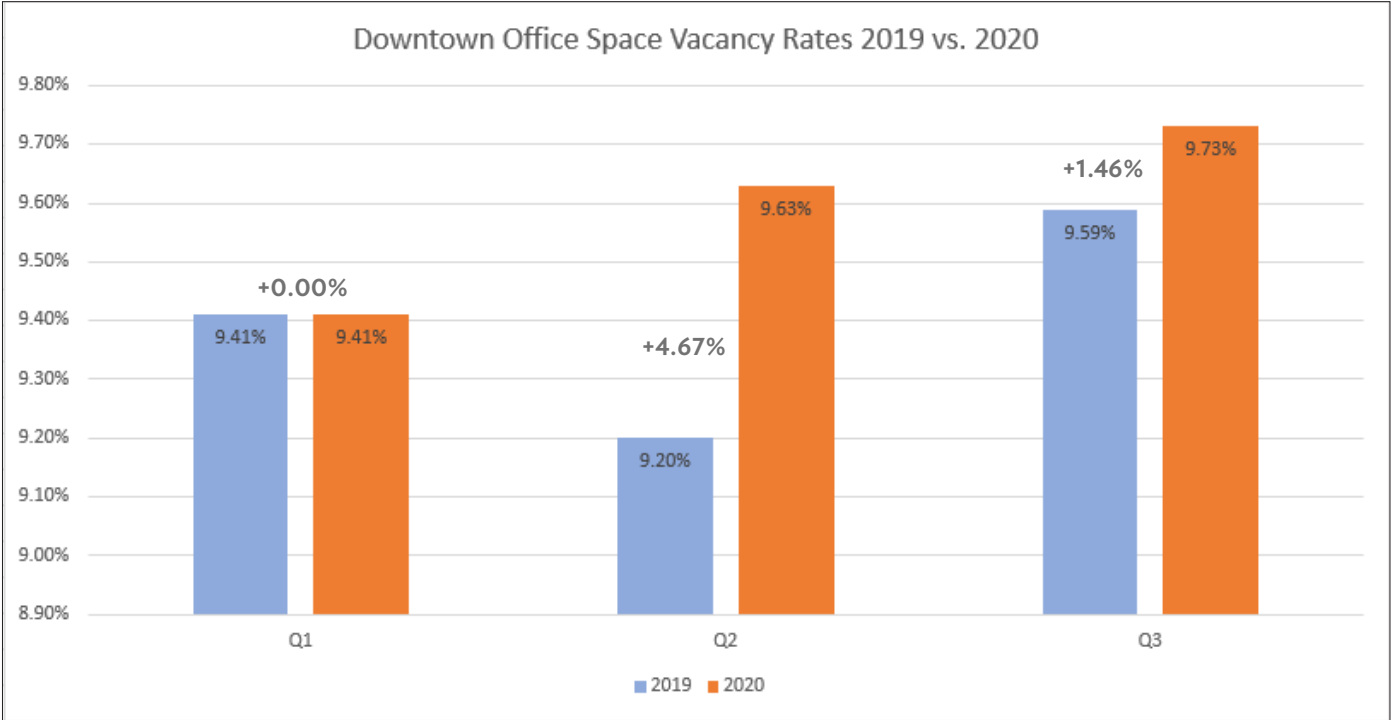
Source: Smith Travel
Research via
Experience GR

Downtown Office Space Vacancy

There was a 3.4% overall increase in vacancy rates between Q1 2020 and Q3 2020. This equates to 6,405 square feet of office space.

Colliers estimates 5,699,330 square feet of occupied space in Q3 2020, which is a 152,319 square foot decrease (-2.6%) since Q1 2020.

There was a 0.6% overall decrease (\$0.13) in rental rates between Q1 2020 and Q3 2020.



Source: Colliers International

Employment

Key Dates

March 15, 2020

MI closes bars/restaurants for dine-in, gyms, theaters and other public places.

June 8, 2020

MI restaurants and bars can reopen at limited capacity.

September 9, 2020

MI gyms, pools and organized sports are allowed to reopen/resume.

July 1, 2020

MI recloses indoor service at bars.

November 18, 2020

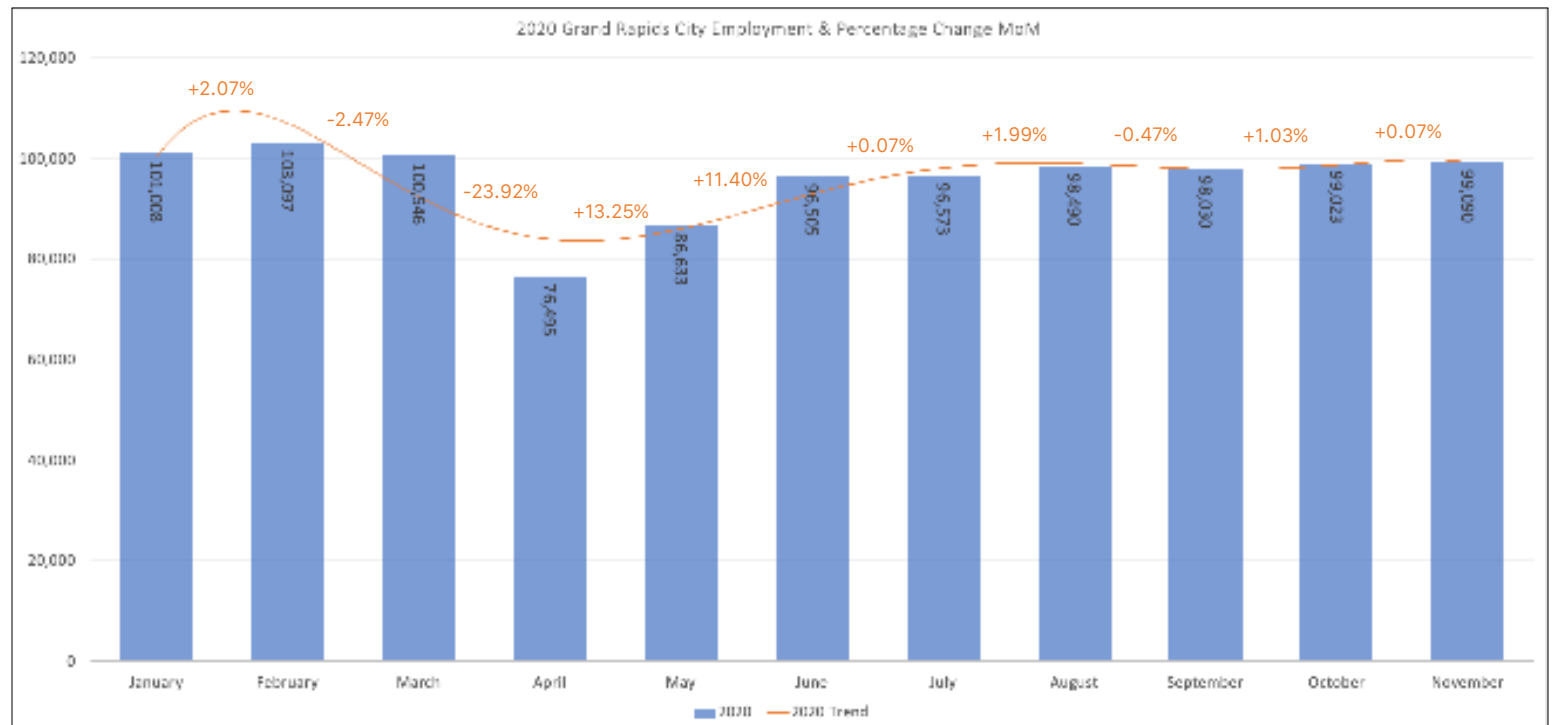
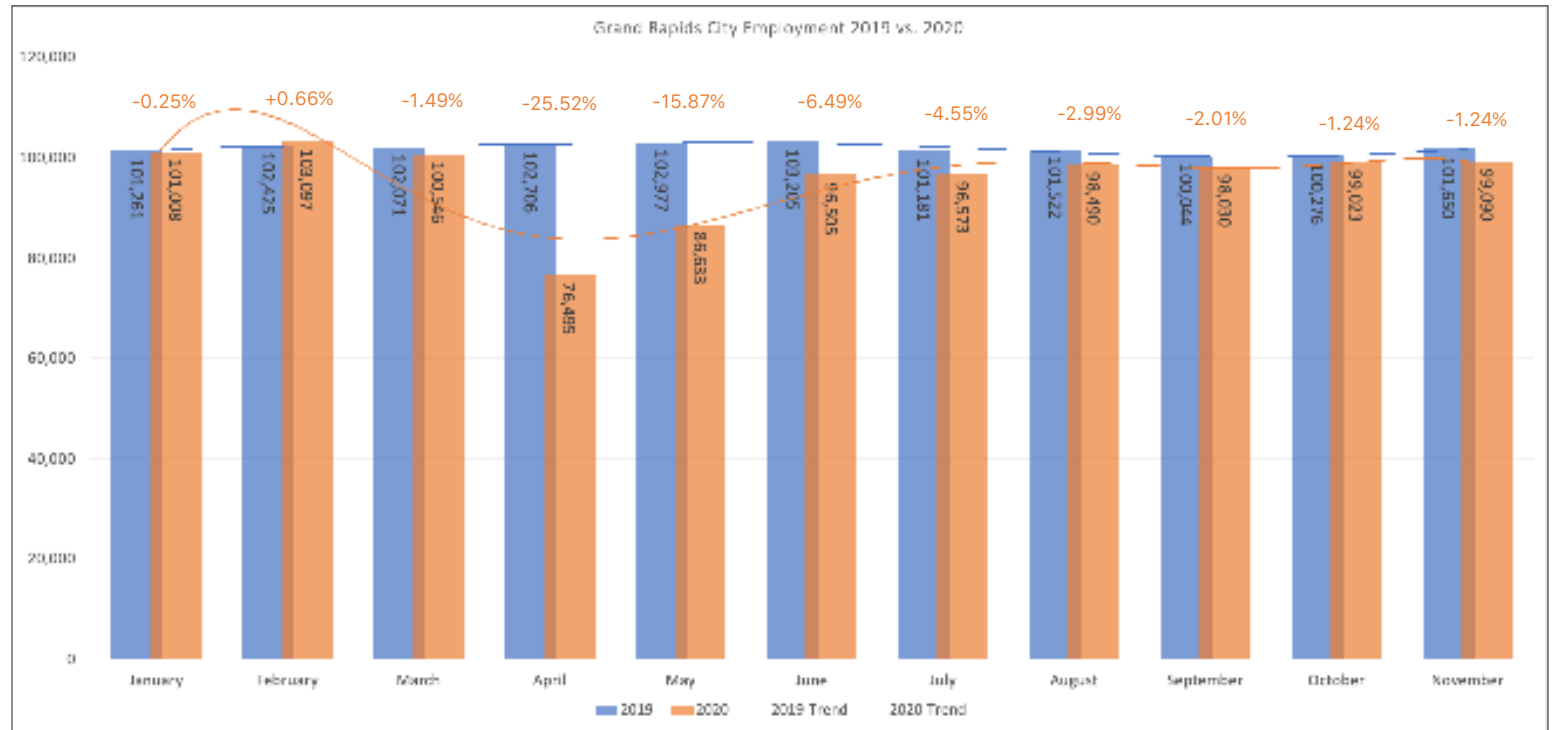
MI closes indoor dining, theaters, bowling alleys, casinos, group fitness classes, organized sports (other than professional sports).

December 18, 2020

MI reopens some businesses such as casinos, cinemas, bowling alleys. Indoor dining remains closed.

February 1, 2021

MI indoor dining reopens with capacity restrictions, 10 p.m. curfew, previously established restrictions.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics via City of Grand Rapids

Downtown Pedestrian Activity

There was a **60% overall decrease** in pedestrian activity across the district during the pandemic, ranging from its biggest dip in April (-70%) and its smallest in August (-28%).

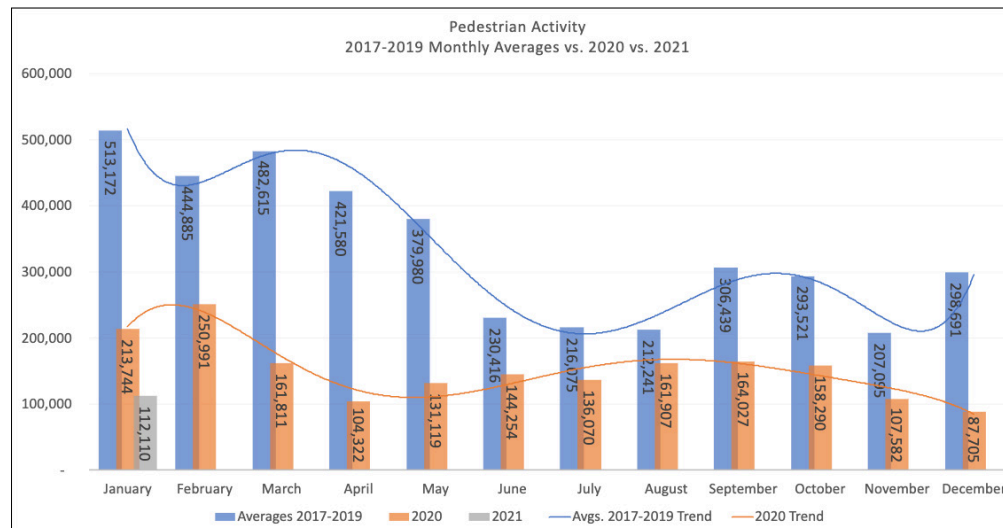
① **Bridge St & Summer Ave** has one of the historically largest volume of pedestrian activity in the district. It experienced a **79% decrease** in activity in March-May 2020 when compared to previous years. Social Zone deployment in June assisted activity with an **84% average increase** in the months the zones were active.

③ **Ah-Nab-Awen Park** had an overall **36% decrease** in pedestrian activity during the pandemic, though it did not see the same dramatic decrease in March and April as most street locations did, and maintained steady traffic throughout May to October.



② **Monroe Ave & Trowbridge St** experienced one of the smallest impacts during the pandemic, with only a **20% decrease** in pedestrian activity, even when considering the high numbers produced during World of Winter 2020 (pre-pandemic). It saw its highest traffic in October and November 2020 - **more than double** the traffic in April and May 2020.

④ **Rosa Parks Circle** saw the largest decrease in total pedestrian activity during the pandemic. Specifically, this location saw a **90% decrease** in activity in March when compared to previous years. Social Zone deployment in June 2020 **tripled** that activity and has remained steady ever since.



Current Downtown Construction and Development

① Residence Inn - anticipated February 2021
 +5,555 square feet of commercial space
 +147 hotel units
 +175 parking spaces
 +51 jobs

② GVSU - anticipated May 2021
 +160,000 square feet of office space
 +66 parking spaces

③ GVSU/Spectrum Parking - anticipated May 2021
 +1,220 parking spaces

④ The Finnley Hotel - anticipated June 2021
 +5 hotel units

⑤ Amway Grand Plaza Renovation - anticipated June 2021

⑥ Acrisure Headquarters- anticipated Spring 2021
 +105,000 square feet of office space
 +150 market condos
 +400 jobs

⑦ RDV Corp. Headquarters - anticipated Spring 2021
 +100,000 square feet of office space
 +9,700 square feet of commercial retail space

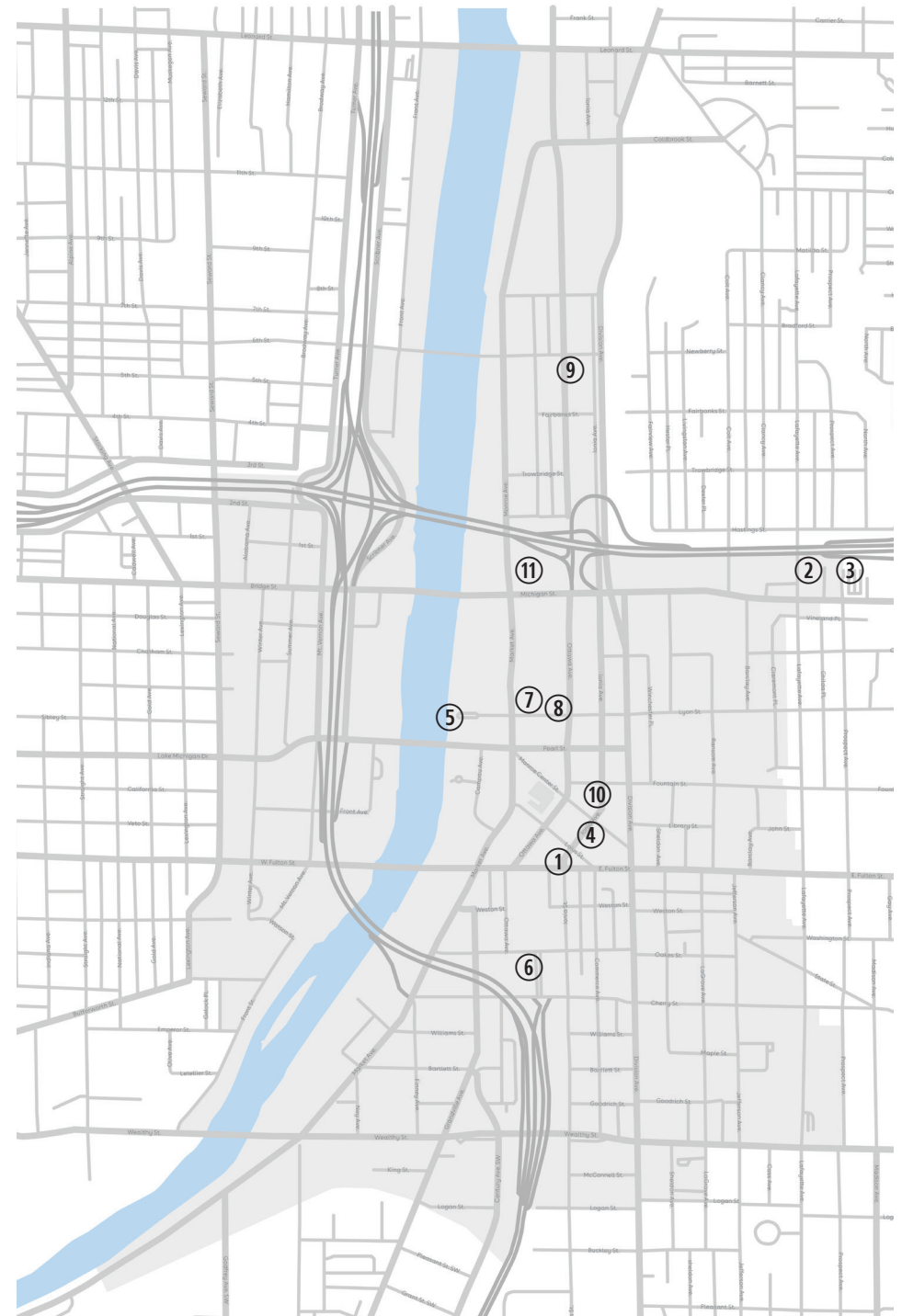
⑧ Fifth Third Redevelopment - anticipated Summer 2021
 +100,000 square feet of office space
 +44,000 square feet of commercial space

⑨ Integrated Architecture - anticipated Fall 2021
 +13,600 square feet of office space
 +20 parking spaces
 +52 jobs

⑩ The Morton Hotel - anticipated 2021
 +32 hotel units

⑪ MSU Innovation Park - anticipated late 2021
 +200,000 square feet of office space
 +600 parking spaces
 +250 jobs

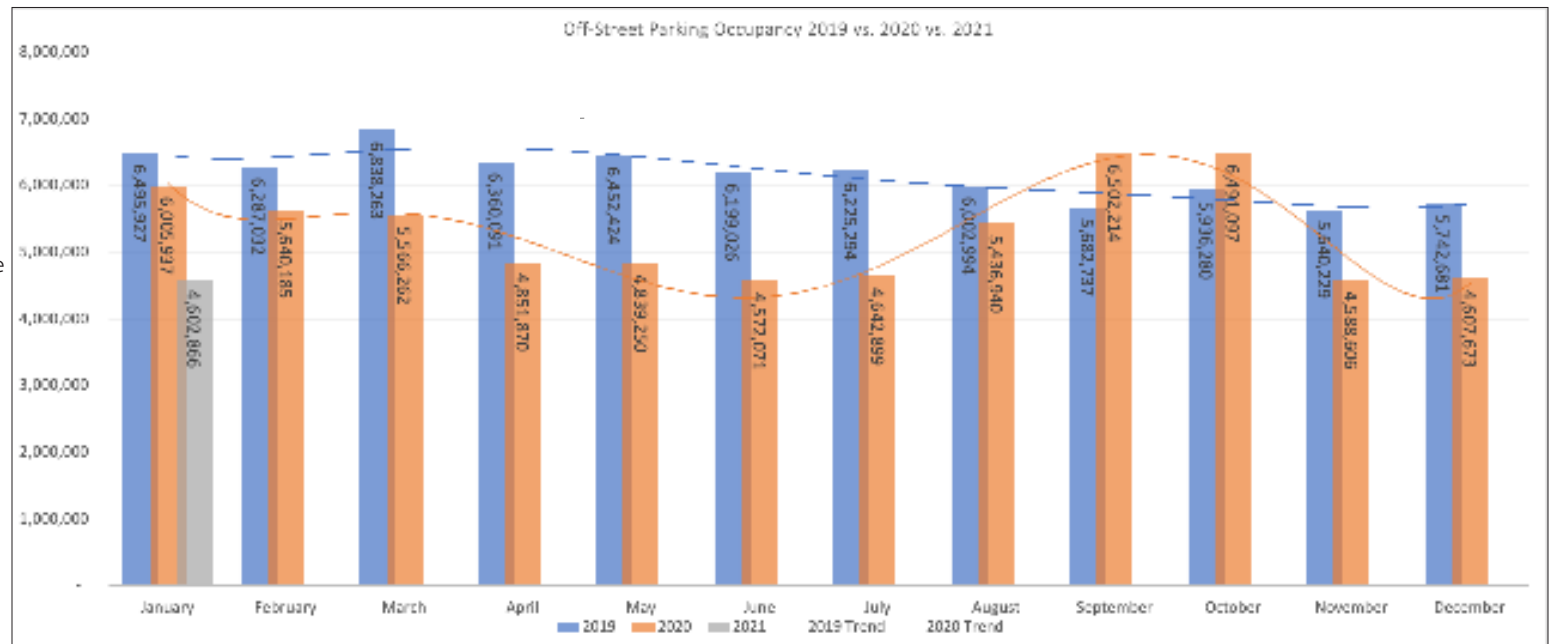
Totals	
678,600 sq ft of office space	
59,255 sq ft of commercial space	
150 residential units	
184 hotel units	
2,081 parking spaces	
753 jobs	



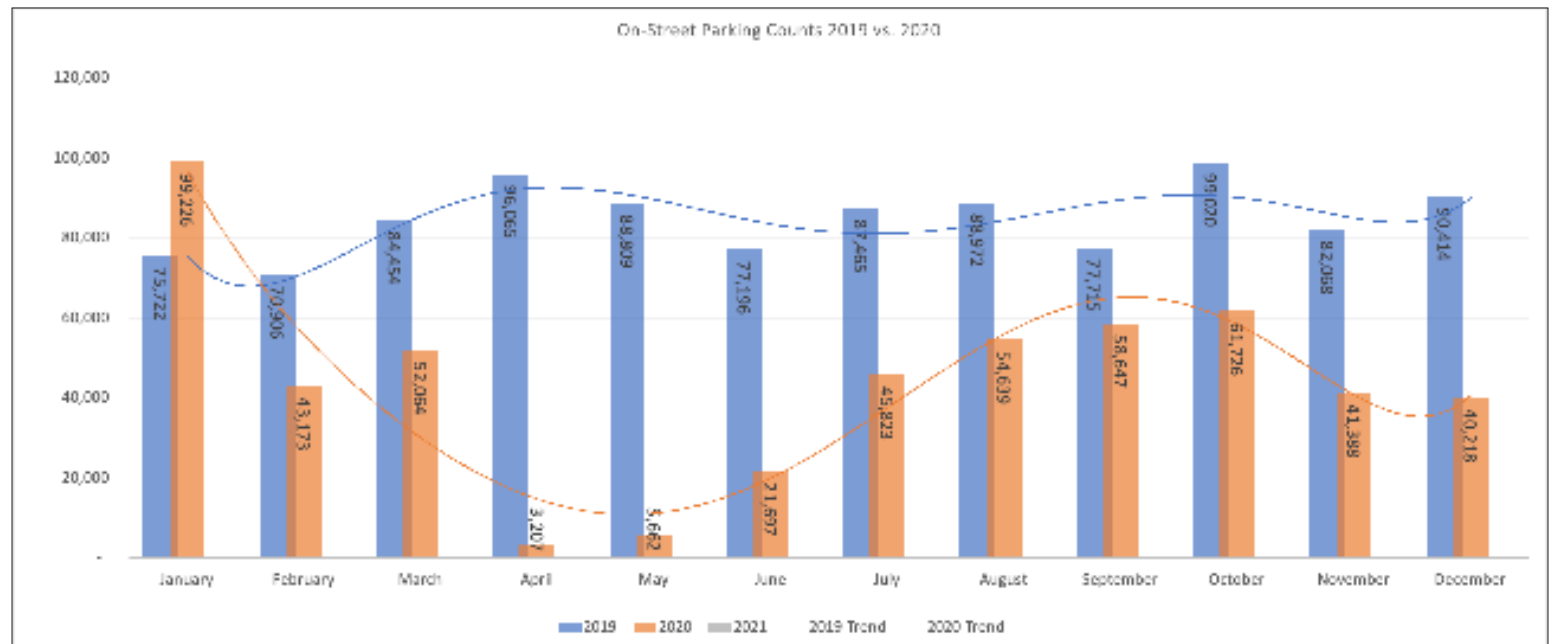
Source: Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

Downtown On- and Off-Street Parking

March 24th, 2020 - July 6th 2020, the city suspended meter enforcement.



	Jan Δ	Feb Δ	March Δ	April Δ	May Δ	June Δ	July Δ	Aug Δ	Sept Δ	Oct Δ	Nov Δ	Dec Δ
2019 vs. 2020	-7.54%	-10.29%	-18.60%	-23.71%	-25.00%	-26.25%	-25.42%	-9.43%	14.42%	9.35%	-18.65%	-19.76%
2020 vs. 2021	-23.36%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



	Jan Δ	Feb Δ	March Δ	April Δ	May Δ	June Δ	July Δ	Aug Δ	Sept Δ	Oct Δ	Nov Δ	Dec Δ
2019 vs. 2020	31.04%	-39.11%	-38.35%	-96.66%	-93.62%	-71.89%	-47.61%	-38.59%	-24.54%	-37.66%	-49.57%	-55.52%
2020 vs. 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: MobileGR

DASH Ridership

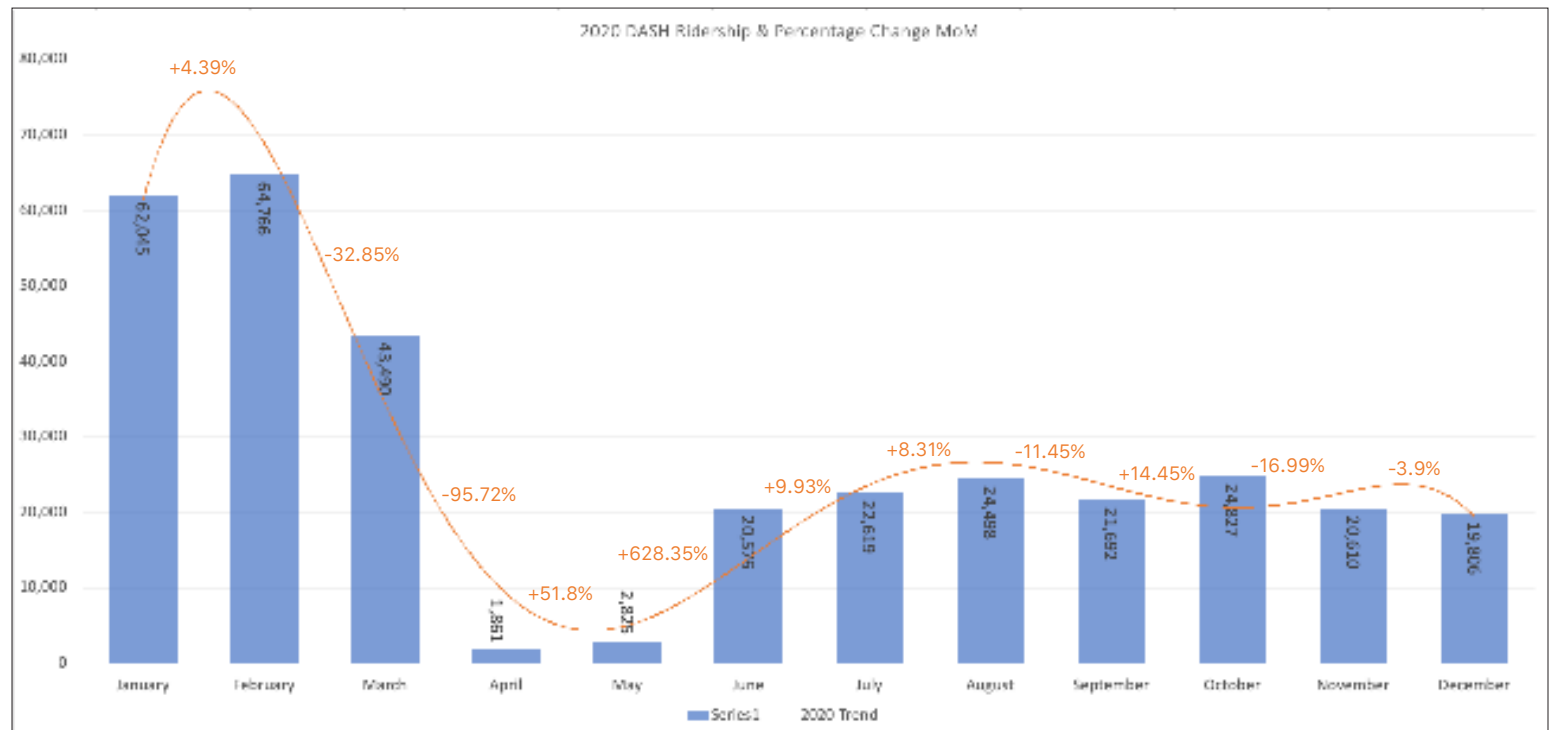
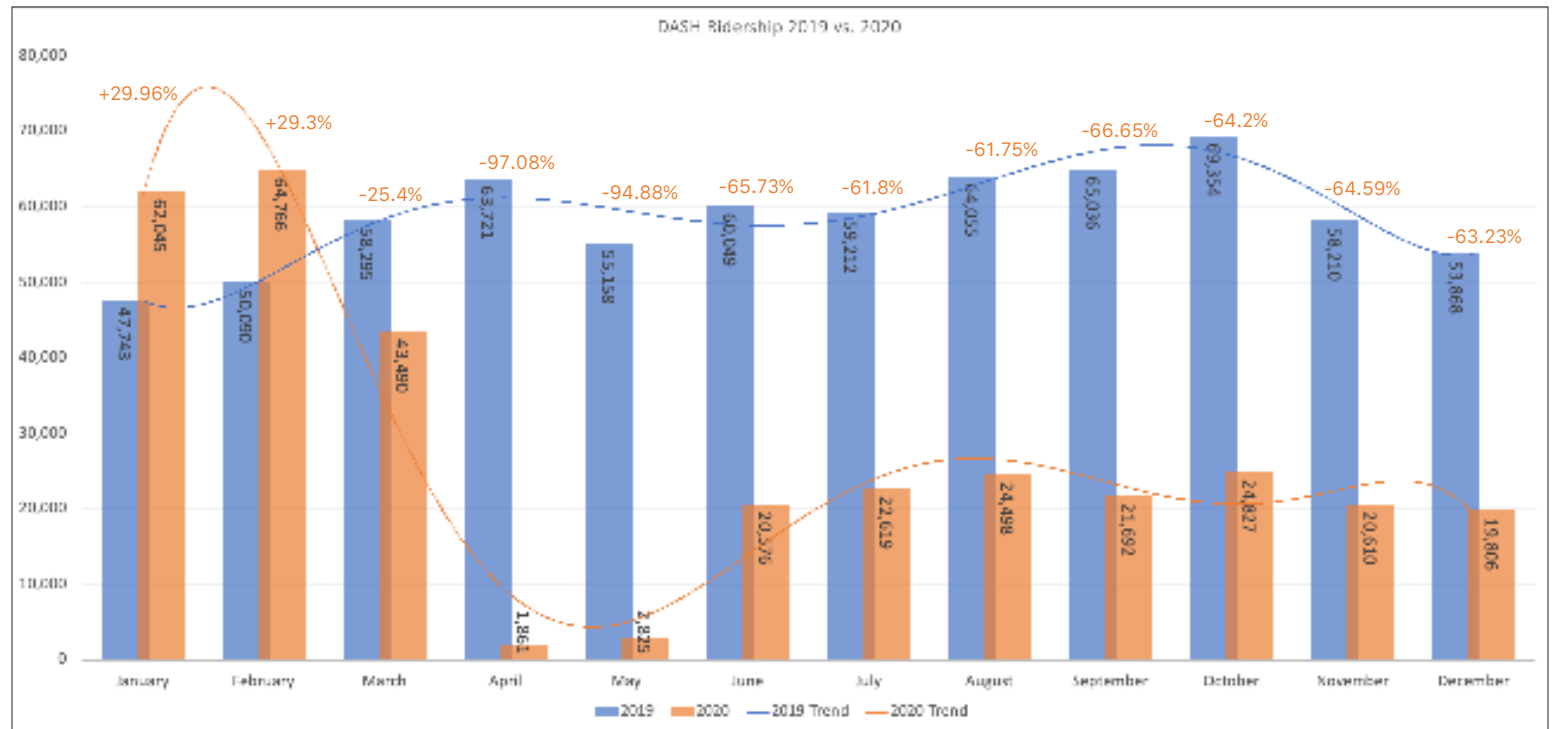
On **March 26th**, DASH services changed to:

DASH West 15-minute frequency
DASH North 20-minute frequency
Operating 7am - 7pm, Mon - Fri

On **April 10th**, DASH services were temporarily suspended

On **May 26th**, DASH services changed to:

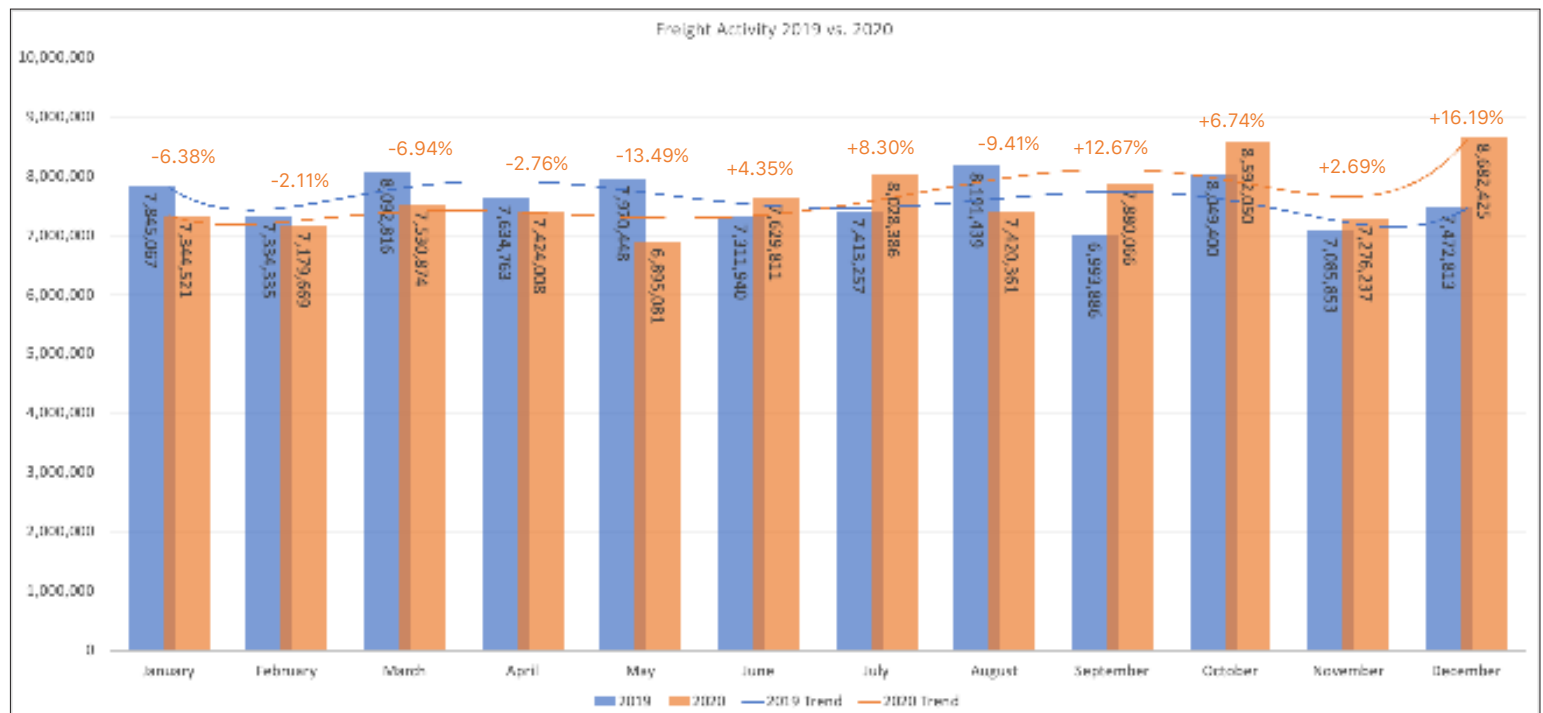
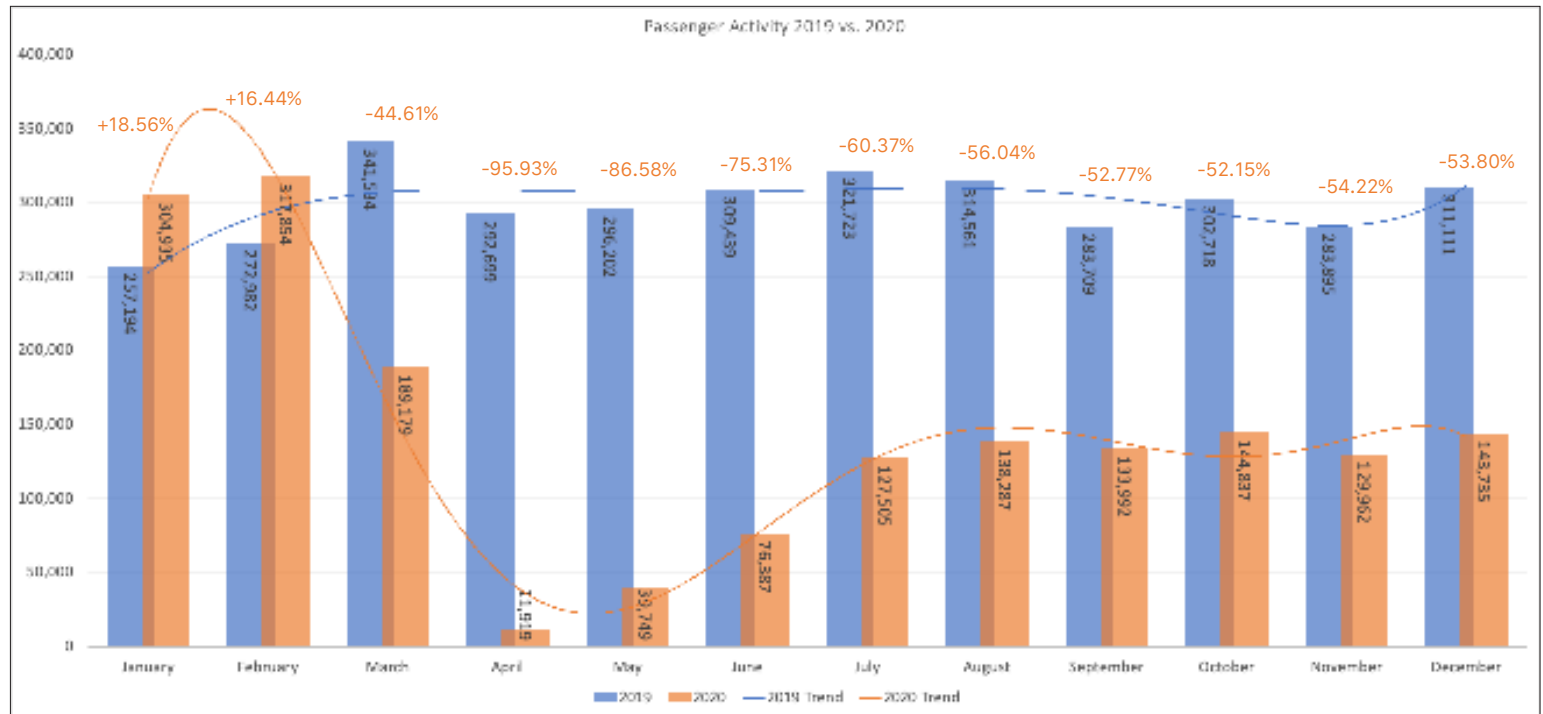
Reduced number of vehicles
Operating 6am - 10 pm, Mon - Sat



Gerald R. Ford International Airport Activity

There was a **51% overall decrease** in overall passenger activity and a **0.5% increase** in overall freight activity.

In 2020, passenger activity **decreased 41%** between February and March, and **decreased 94%** between March and April.



Source: Gerald R. Ford Airport

Kent County Vaccination Distribution & Administration

Kent County has a population of 656,955 (2019).

83% of doses distributed (99,625) have been administered.

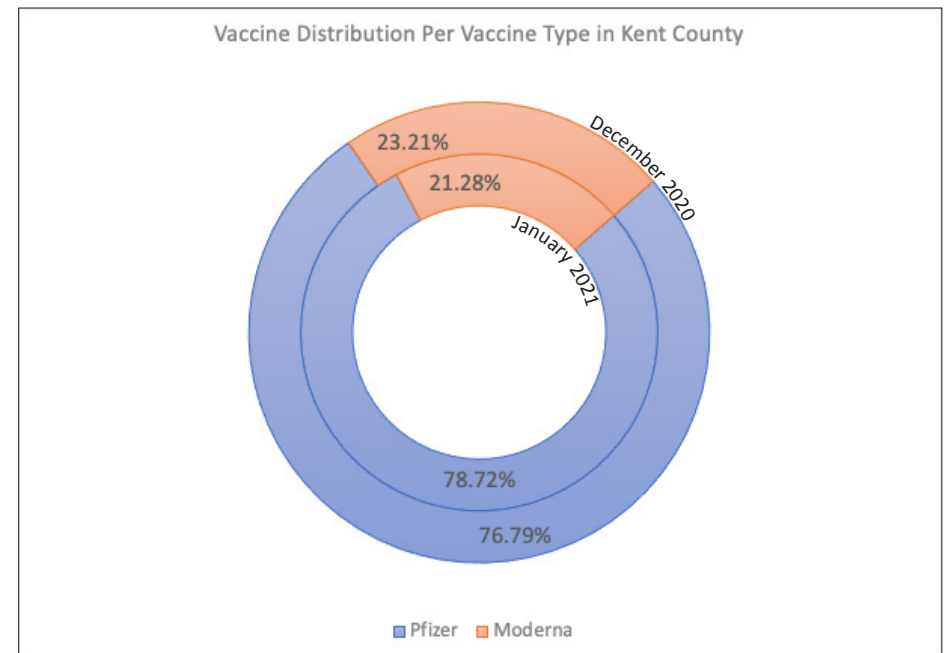
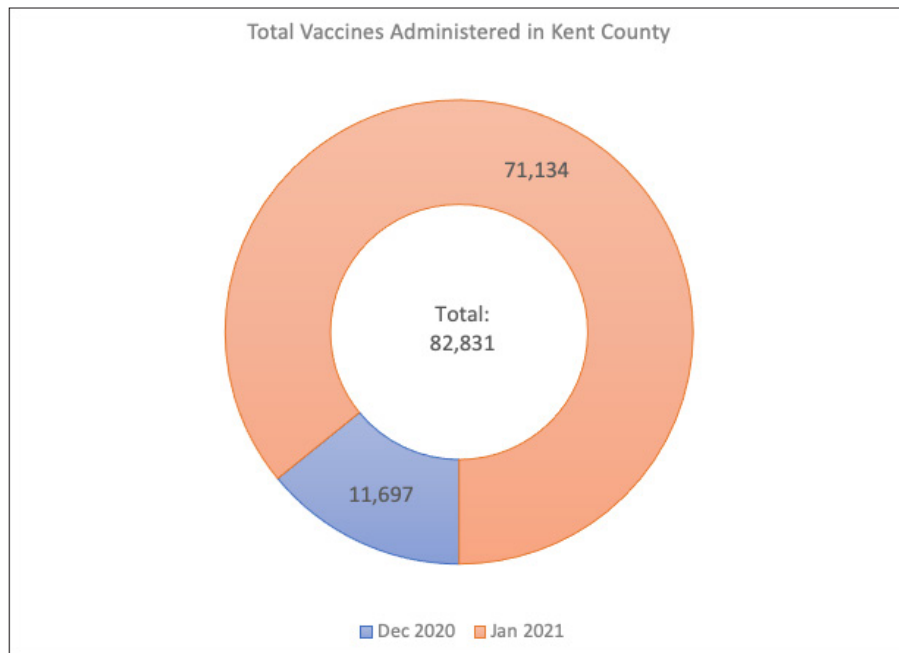
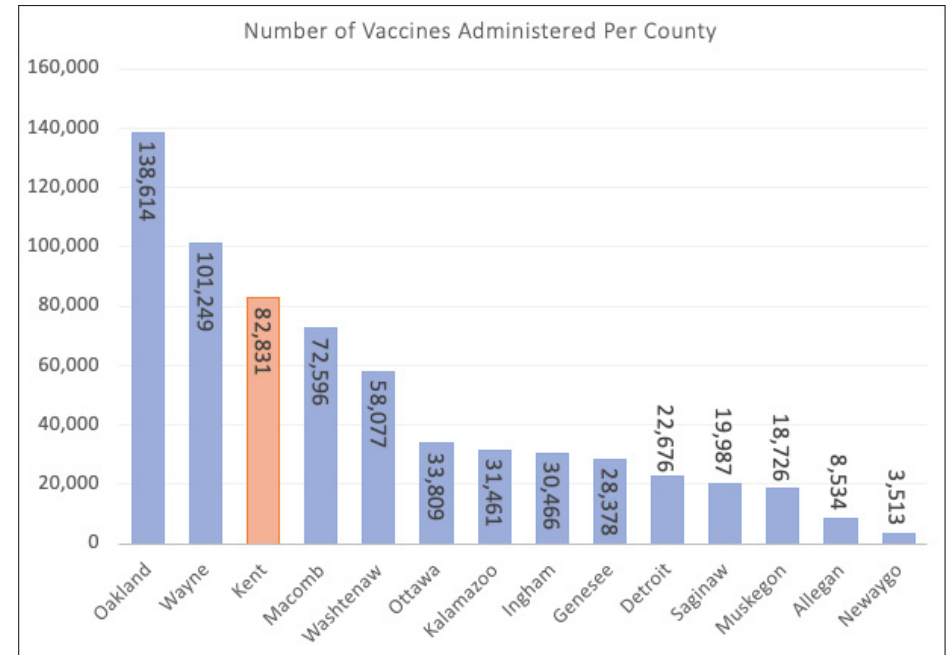
Of those 82,831 doses administered, 78% were the first dose (of two).

Of the 161 enrolled COVID vaccination facilities,

- 74 are pharmacies
- 38 are family practice locations
- 10 are hospitals
- 10 are pediatric locations

DeVos Place administered **over 8,000 vaccines** in its first week.

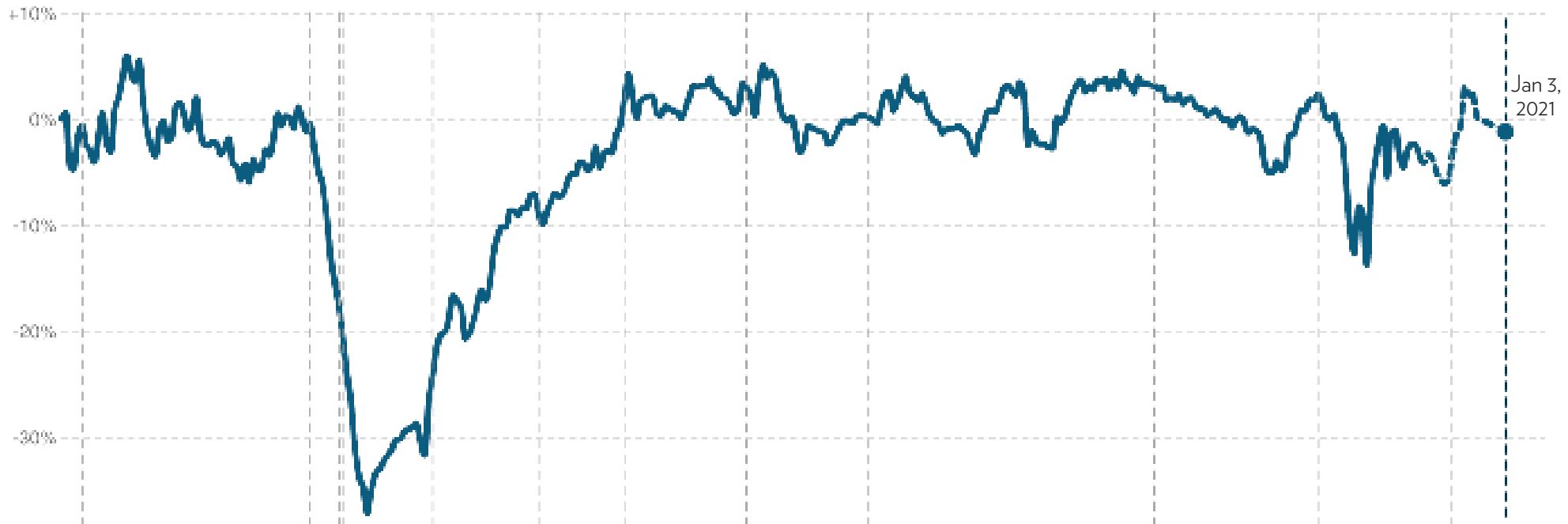
1,735,525 vaccines have been distributed in Michigan to date
(1,001,873 have been administered).



Michigan Consumer Spending

Percent Change in All Consumer Spending*

In Michigan, as of January 03 2021, total spending by all consumers **decreased** by **1.2%** compared to January 2020.



Key Dates

March 10, 2020 - Michigan confirms its first two COVID cases; State of Emergency declared

March 13, 2020 - Gov. Whitmer closes all K-12 schools; bans gatherings of 250 or more

March 15, 2020 - Gov. Whitmer orders the closure of bars/restaurants for dine-in, gyms, theaters, and other public places

March 24, 2020 - statewide stay-at-home order begins (subsequently extended 4 times)

April 13, 2020 - first round of stimulus payments begins

June 19, 2020 - stay-at-home order expires

September 9, 2020 - gyms, pools, and organized sports are allowed to reopen/resume

October 9, 2020 - movie theaters, performance venues, arcades, and other businesses can reopen at limited capacity

November 15, 2020 - Gov. Whitmer orders the closure of high schools and universities, as well as other businesses (extended on December 7, 2020)

December 18, 2020 - partial shutdown extended but allows for some businesses like theaters, casinos, and bowling alleys to reopen at limited capacity

December 29, 2020 - second round of stimulus payments begins

February 1, 2021 - Indoor dining reopens with limited capacity, curfew, and other requirements

Source: Opportunity Insights
Economic Tracker
tracktherecovery.org

Downtown Grand Rapids

Retail Analysis and Strategy Phase I Findings



A Retail Real Estate Consulting Firm

DDA Board Meeting
January 13, 2021

Mike Berne
MJB Consulting

Scope of Work

- Phase I: Analysis of COVID-19 Impact
 - Where is retail in Downtown Grand Rapids headed?
- Phase II: Strategy for COVID-19 Response
 - What should the DDA do about it?



Phase I

- Extensive (virtual) touring
- Review of available data sets and reports
- Discussions with landlords and brokers
- Conversations with merchants
- Benchmarking with national trends

National Context

- Central business districts (CBD's) hit hard
 - Office space
 - Convention / visitor trade
 - Modest residential
 - Experiential economy
 - Small businesses



National Context

- Adaptations and protections
 - Outdoor sales
 - Other revenue sources (besides walk-in)
 - Becoming "essential"
 - PPP and other public-sector relief
 - Community goodwill / fundraising
 - Cost-cutting (incl. jobs)
 - Receptive landlords
 - Eviction moratoriums



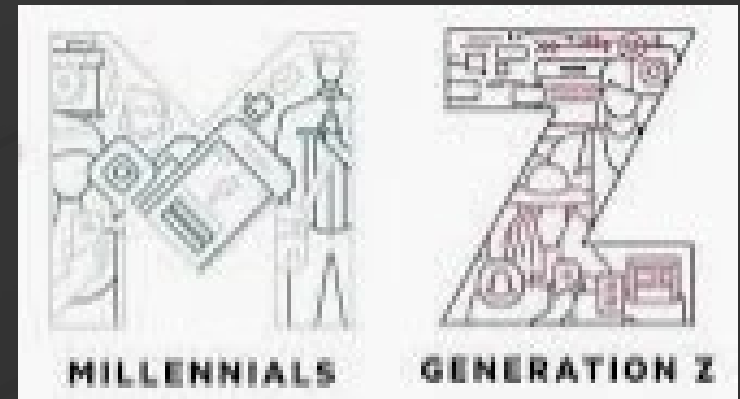
National Context

- Improving prospects in 2021
 - Less carnage
 - Market Darwinism
 - Second stimulus
 - Mass vaccination
 - Economic rebound
 - Pent-up demand
 - Entrepreneurial energy
 - Lower rents



National Context

- Uncertainty in CBD's
 - Generational change
 - Home cooking
 - Anchor prospects
 - Landlord flexibility
 - Remote work
 - Business travel
 - Co-opted formats



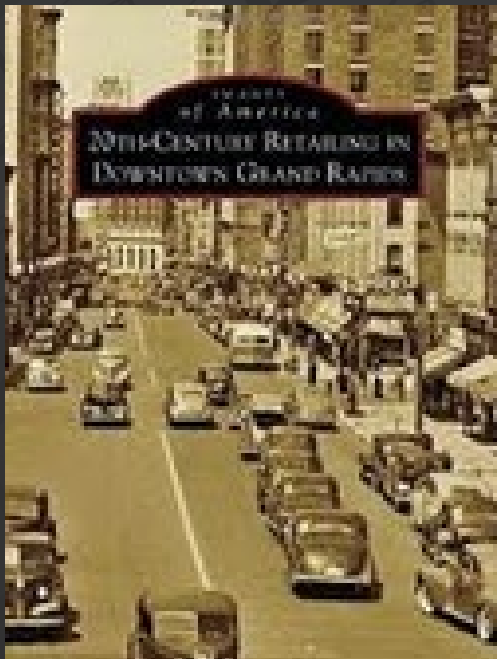
Downtown Grand Rapids

- Pre-COVID momentum
 - Punching well above its weight



Big Picture

- The new Downtown paradigm
 - Grand Rapids "nailed it"...
 - Versus primary shopping destination



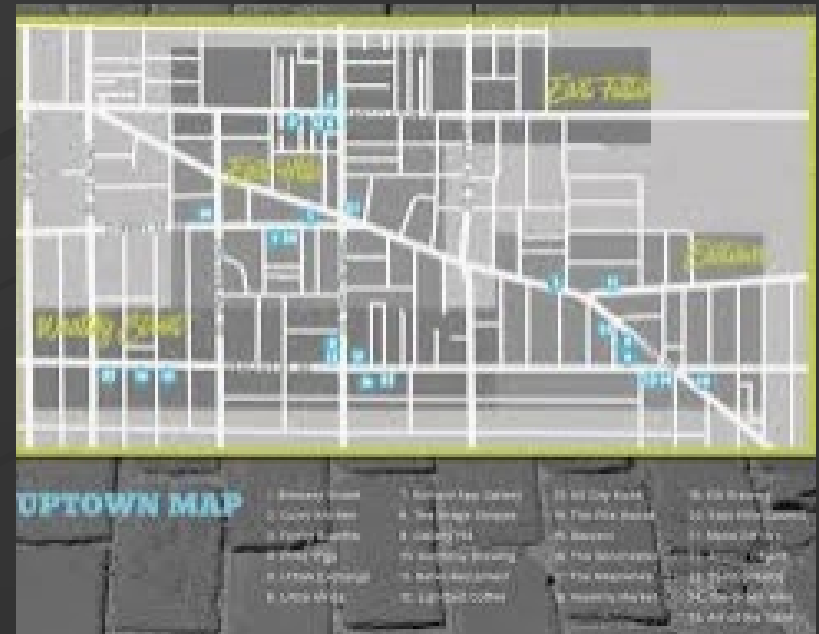
Big Picture

- Drivers of demand
 - "Trade area" population
 - Captive submarkets
 - Downtown residents
 - Not an either-or



Big Picture

- Ceiling to demand
 - The near neighborhoods
 - Neo-hipster urbanites
 - Broadening the draw
 - Minority *consumer*



Big Picture

- Sprawl and synergy
 - Value of clustering



Big Picture

- ... but cluster where?
 - The market ultimately decides



Big Picture

- Concede the soft goods...
 - ... except as an incubator



Big Picture

- Or make it happen...
 - Retail as amenity



Next Steps: Phase II

- Existing programs, capacities and resources
- Conversations with other stakeholders
- Review of zoning and regulatory framework
- Consideration of possible "catalyst" projects
- Case studies from analogous Downtowns

Contact Info

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A Retail Real Estate Consulting Firm

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 24, 2021

TO: DGRI Board of Advisors

FROM: Tim Kelly, AICP
DGRI President & CEO

SUBJECT: Item #5 – FY21 Priority Project Updates – Homelessness Initiatives

Among the adopted local advocacy objectives for DGRI in FY21 was to participate in initiatives to address homelessness and quality of life issues in Downtown. Since that advocacy agenda was adopted in September 2020, the City of Grand Rapids has undertaken numerous initiatives toward this priority, some of which are summarized in the provided attachments. Those include:

- A presentation to the DDA from January 2021 from the City of Grand Rapids' Interim Homelessness Coordinator and Managing Director of Community Development;
- A December 28, 2020 memo sent to City Manager Washington summarizing work the City of Grand Rapids initiated at Heartside Park as well as other ongoing City initiatives to address homelessness; and
- A January 2021 FAQ related updating the City's work and addressing proposals at Heartside Park from January 2021.

City staff will present additional information and be on hand to answer questions at the February 24, 2021 DGRI Board meeting.



Housing and Homelessness Update

Downtown Development Authority
February 10, 2021

Tammy Britton, Interim Homelessness Coordinator
Connie Bohatch, Managing Director of Community Services





Homelessness Response





Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)

Launched April 2020 in response to pandemic to reduce spread among homeless persons

- Two teams of two staff (one fire and police) providing daily “boots on the ground” outreach
- Respond specifically to issues of street homelessness
- Assist in problem solving with businesses, residents and services providers

Refined mission and goals beyond pandemic

- Mission: To preserve health and safety and improve outcomes for homeless persons and our community
- Goals:
 - 1) Provide timely response to concerns and complaints,
 - 2) Improve public health and safety outcomes, and
 - 3) Partner with community stakeholders in service delivery

Expansion

- Partnered with Network180 to add an addiction specialist/recovery coach and social worker to each team
- Added Saturdays and hours, coverage now Monday thru Saturday 6 am – 6 pm
- Adding an additional team in March 2021 – allows two teams daily Monday through Friday



Homelessness Work Group

Launched In October 2020 – function of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

- Executive level, interdisciplinary team, authorized and empowered to act in emergency management mode
 - ✓ Police, Fire, Public Services, Parks and Recreation, Code Compliance, and Community Development departments
- Mission:
 - ✓ To protect health and safety and improve outcomes for homeless persons and our community by addressing immediate, emerging and systemic conditions made worse by COVID-19

Worked to refine HOT team mission/goals, and supported expansion

Facilitated ERRIS investments, including:

- Supporting shelter operations to address COVID protocols and increase bed capacity for women's sheltering
- Increasing case management and street outreach services
- Supporting rapid re-housing efforts for unsheltered persons on Monroe Center
 - ✓ 51 unsheltered persons engaged with a housing resource specialist
 - ✓ 38 connected to a permanent housing resource
 - ✓ 25 moved into temporary shelter, others with family/friends
 - ✓ 7 permanently housed



Homelessness Work Group (continued)

Shelter Expansion

- Partnered with Mel Trotter Ministries and Guiding Light to increase emergency shelter bed capacity during winter months (Purple East)
 - ✓ 88 guests on 2/8 – average 65 guests
 - ✓ 52 people on average daily using warming center
 - ✓ 11 days in January Mel Trotter at capacity – If not for expansion, would have been turned away

Heartside Park

- Clean-up 12/21 – 12/23/2020; outreach conducted for several weeks in advance
- Online petition to turn Heartside Park into an urban campground
- The City responded with the *Heartside Park Question & Answers*

City Commission Listening Sessions

- 2 sessions facilitated by Dwelling Place and Heartside Downtown Neighborhood Association (HDNA) for Heartside area residents:
 - ✓ **Concerns:** safety for all residents, use of Heartside Park/downtown green space, access to affordable housing and homelessness resources, increase in homelessness
 - ✓ **Solutions:** affordable housing, access to mental health and social services, shared use of park and amenities, park improvements and programming



Additional City Actions

Implemented cleanliness initiative

- Providing additional resources to clean sidewalks, streets, alleys, bridges, parks, shelters, bus stops, etc.
- Partners include The Rapid, MDOT, Kent County Road Commission, DGRI, Steepletown Ministries, Next Step of West Michigan, City departments (Mobile GR, Parks and Recreation, Refuse and Code Compliance) and HOT team

Enhanced partnership with DGRI and other stakeholders

- Downtown Ambassadors working earlier shifts – engaging homeless persons before the day starts
- Improving environmental design to mitigate issues discouraging business patrons/safety concerns

Appointed an Interim Homelessness Coordinator

- Support HOT efforts
- Coordinate City service responses
- Support external partnerships

Annual City Investments in Housing and Homelessness

Primarily supported by federal programs

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME)
- Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)

Fiscal Year 2021

- July 1, 2020 –June 30, 2021)
- \$4,656,183

Investments include

- Construction of affordable housing units
- Major and minor home repairs, including making homes accessible and lead safe
- Rent and utility assistance to prevent eviction and to rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families
- Legal and fair housing services and education

City COVID-related Investments in Housing and Homelessness

\$3,316,218

Economic Resiliency and Recovery Investment Strategy (ERRIS)

- Primary funding source – supplemental CDBG and ESG provided through CARES Act
- Includes \$250K from reserved housing funds

ERRIS Investment Areas

- *Housing Security* – homeless/imminently at risk persons and families (\$2,844,218)
 - ✓ Emergency and bridge shelter
 - ✓ Street outreach
 - ✓ Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing
- *Housing Support* – maintain stable housing (\$222,000)
 - ✓ Foreclosure intervention counseling
 - ✓ Tenant legal affairs
 - ✓ Eviction prevention case management
- *Housing Resiliency* – help undocumented residents stay in their homes (\$250,000)
 - ✓ La Lucha Fund rent and mortgage assistance

County and State COVID-related Investment in Housing and Homelessness

Kent County CARES Act funding (1/22/2021)

- Total Investment Housing and Homelessness
 - ✓ \$8.2 million

Investment Areas

- COVID-positive Isolation – \$2,250,000
- Mitigation of Homelessness
 - ✓ Affordable housing – \$2,183,000
 - ✓ Rent assistance – \$1,952,000
 - ✓ Hotel/motel sheltering– \$1,660,000
 - ✓ Purple East shelter – \$165,000

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

- Eviction Diversion Program
 - ✓ \$2.8 million
- Emergency Rental Assistance – NEW from US Treasury
 - ✓ Anticipate \$38.5 million – \$35M direct financial assistance



Contact Information

- For issues related to street homelessness, contact:
Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)
(616) 456-4240 or grhot@grcity.us
- For persons or families experiencing housing instability, call:
2-1-1 or 1-800-887-1107
- For information related to the Homelessness Work Group/City initiatives, contact:
Ms. Tammy Britton, Interim Homelessness Coordinator
(616) 456-3765 or tbritton@grcity.us

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

DATE: December 28, 2020

TO: Mark Washington, City Manager

FROM: Tammy Britton, Homelessness Coordinator
James Hurt, Managing Director of Public Services

SUBJECT: Update on Emergency Shelter and Addressing Unsafe Conditions in Heartside Park

Following multiple weeks of outreach by City staff and social service partner organizations, the City addressed unsafe conditions in Heartside Park beginning the morning of Monday, December 21. As part of the preceding multi-week effort, individuals staying in the park were informed that camping is not allowed in City parks, received consistent outreach, and were additionally informed that shelter capacity was being added to the community. This outreach was done by officials from the Grand Rapids Homeless Outreach Team and officers from the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD). The health and safety of individuals staying in the park, and of the broader community, were the City's primary considerations as employees from multiple departments worked to transition those individuals staying outdoors to indoor shelter ahead of the coldest winter months.

The City coordinated with community partners to arrange for safe, warm, and sanitary alternatives following COVID-19 safety protocols for those who were staying in the park. The City took the unprecedented step of helping to secure and paying for a 5-month lease of the former "Purple East" building at 250 Ionia Avenue SW – across the street from Heartside Park – at a cost of \$165,000 for use as an emergency shelter. Mel Trotter Ministries agreed to operate the facility, following proven COVID-safe shelter protocols.

A December 18 assessment of Heartside Park by the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) identified significant health risks to the individuals staying there, and to the community, including dangerous fire and fume inhalation hazards, inadequate ventilation, improper disposal of drug paraphernalia, open human defecation and urination, litter and burning of trash, non-compliance with COVID-safe protocols, soiled and damaged clothing and bedding, and general unsanitary conditions. These risks, combined with the forecast of sustained below-freezing temperatures during the second half of last week, provided compelling public health and humanitarian reasons to move forward with the transition of individuals to indoor shelter and with the associated park maintenance.

Following the multi-week outreach effort and establishment of the nearby emergency shelter, a "notice to vacate" was posted at the park on Friday, December 18. (The City provided more than the required minimum 48-hour notice prior to the start of work on December 21.) The work included removal of litter and abandoned items, relocation or storage of tents and other belongings, and encouragement of individuals to move to the new emergency shelter facility across the street or to the variety of other shelter options available to meet a person's

particular circumstances. When City staff arrived to begin work, conditions in the park were observed to be consistent with the KCHD assessment. COVID-safe protocols were not in place for those living in the park. Empty food containers, used needles, and numerous other refuse items were on the ground and throughout the park. City staff and police officers spoke with individuals asking what items they would like to keep and those they wished to discard. Only unclaimed items and those items individuals wished to discard were removed by City employees and contractors. Mental health professionals were available as needed to help identify solutions.

The work to address the unsafe conditions in Heartside Park was substantially completed by noon on Wednesday, December 23. The following outcomes were achieved:

- Fifty-six (56) individuals stayed overnight at 250 Ionia on December 27 representing a continued increase since it opened.
- The entire park was cleared of litter and discarded refuse items.

Some recent media reports and correspondence from members of the public contain misunderstandings of the process the City followed, and of the care that was taken to protect the individual and property rights of the persons experiencing homelessness staying in Heartside Park. The following information is provided to clarify these misunderstandings:

Voluntary Compliance

The Public Safety departments have prioritized education over enforcement. No tickets have been issued or arrests made in our efforts to address unsafe conditions in the park.

During the initial 24 hours, the vast majority of individuals staying in the park, vacated of their own accord and sought alternative arrangements. Over the next 36 hours, City staff, including support from the Homeless Outreach Team and community partners, worked with those individuals that remained in the park to help assess their circumstances and find relocation solutions, none of which required GRPD to take enforcement action. This compassionate, person-centered approach ensured the unique individual needs of those experiencing homelessness were accounted for while preventing criminalization.

CDC Guidelines

The health and safety of the individuals experiencing homelessness in our community is a high priority for the City. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines acknowledge that "Outdoor settings may allow people to increase physical distance between themselves and others. However, sleeping outdoors often does not provide protection from the environment, adequate access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, or connection to services and healthcare. The balance of risks should be considered for each individual experiencing unsheltered homelessness."

The City took into consideration a variety of risks associated with living in the encampment at Heartside Park, including COVID-19, the significant health risks identified by KCHD, and increasingly cold weather. After working with our community partners to ensure there were safe, healthy, and warm options consistent the latest

CDC and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines for sheltering – including isolation facilities for those that test positive for COVID-19 – we made the determination that the encampment had devolved to the point of being dangerous and we could no longer allow individuals to reside in those conditions.

Personal Property

City staff and police officers, with support from the Homeless Outreach Team, spoke with individuals regarding personal items. Storage for personal belongings was made available by Mel Trotter Ministries. Only unclaimed items and those items individuals wished to discard were removed by City employees and contractors. Several unclaimed tents and associated items were relocated to a separate City location where they are being stored and may be claimed during the subsequent 30 days.

These topics also were raised by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in a letter to the Mayor, City Commissioners, and City Manager dated December 19. The City Attorney responded to the ACLU in a letter dated December 22 in which she noted the City's compliance with applicable legal requirements.

Housing and Homelessness Initiatives

The City continues to prioritize a wide range of initiatives to increase housing availability and reduce the incidence of homelessness in the City of Grand Rapids. In addition to continuation and expansion of the Homeless Outreach Team, the following new and previously in-process initiatives were shared with the City Commission and general public in a memorandum from the City Manager on December 10:

Fiscal Year 2021 New Investments	
1. Eviction Prevention Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a dedicated Benefits Specialist from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to administer the eviction prevention program. (cost includes coverage for October 2020 – September 2021) 	\$66,700*
2. Additional Funding for Housing Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Economic Resiliency and Recovery Work Group, consider opportunities for programing of the remaining \$1 million in CDBG-CV3 in the third quarter of FY2021 based on feedback from initial investments. 	Some portion of \$1,120,648 CDBG – CV3 award
3. Winter Homeless Shelters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winter homeless shelter 5-month lease cost 	\$165,000*

*These investments were approved by the City Commission as part of the December 15, 2020 budget amendment.

**Fiscal Year 2021 Existing Plans and Work
Aligned with Consensus Priority Topics**

1. Operate the Homeless Outreach Team

- \$500,000 allocated for FY21.
- 4 Police and Fire personnel along with contractual work from Network 180 from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. five days a week.
 - HOT visits 15 or more locations throughout the city each week, making contact with persons experiencing homelessness at approximately 80% of the site visits.
 - Sites with higher need are visited multiple times in a week.
 - HOT has provided direct action on abuse and crimes committed against people experiencing homelessness.
- 45 temporary and permanent housing solutions provided in partnership with Community Rebuilders and Geographically Targeted Housing Outreach Initiative.
- Pilot alternative response strategies by July 2021.

	Completed	In Progress
1. <i>Chlorophyll a</i>		
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In Progress

Upcoming

2. Eviction Prevention

- This 3-year program launched in Jan. 2018 and will end Dec. 31, 2020.
- The 2020 report is not yet available. 2019 highlights included 334 households screened with 100 receiving assistance; 69% served had children; 70% were African American households; 73.4% of eviction court cases were from 49503, 49507 and 49504; nearly 52% cited employment instability; 92% of respondents achieved some form of housing stability and 82% remained in the same unit.
- 227 signed writs in 61st District Court for 2020 as of November 10, 2020.

In Progress

In Progress

Completed and In Progress

3. Affordable Housing Fund

- \$250,000 invested in La Lucha to support rent and mortgage assistance.
- Working to refine the role of the Housing Fund and coordinate with existing funding sources within the City and broader community (HOME, CDBG, philanthropy, etc.).
- In addition to the \$250,000 invested in La Lucha, funds totaling approximately \$878,000 have been reserved as an initial capital investment in the Property Management Fund and Grants Fund that can be augmented by other potential sources of funding such as two-thirds of PILOT payments, first-year income tax from City-incentivized housing developments, possible proceeds from land divestments, and philanthropic investments.
- Designate a fund and fiduciary as well as establish a board.

Completed

In Progress

In Progress

In Progress



Heartside Park

Questions and Answers

January 2021

What has community engagement on Heartside Park told the City of Grand Rapids?

In 2020, the Parks department sought public input on planned improvements to Heartside Park scheduled for 2021. The engagement results can be found at:

<https://publicinput.com/Report/n5l44ci0n2j>

- The survey for public input had 70 participants and 142 comments.
- 90% of respondents live in the City of Grand Rapids; 57% within walking distance of the park.
- 40% of respondents said they visit the park once or less per year.
- Only 13% of respondents state that they feel welcome in the park.
- Results for top priority improvements to the park were improved restrooms for year-round access and improvements to allow for more community events.
- Commenters stated that they do not feel safe in the park and it is not kid-friendly.

How else has the City of Grand Rapids sought community engagement regarding Heartside Park?

Heartside Park is one of only five parks with green space in downtown and the only one south of Fulton. The Heartside neighborhood is home to 2,293 housing units. Within two blocks of Heartside Park, there are 635 units and 182 housing units directly across the street.

The [Heartside Quality of Life Study](#) completed in 2019 listened to and documented over 200 voices in the neighborhood. This resident-driven initiative led with these goals:

- Engage a wide variety of stakeholders and expand neighborhood voice
- Develop mutual understanding and create a vision for the future
- Identify collaborative, community-based solutions
- Foster community ownership of the process and implementation
- Improve Quality of Life for ALL who live, work, and play in Heartside.

Study recommendations specific to parks include:

- "Explore expanded public restroom options within Heartside's city parks. Heartside Park public restrooms should be winterized to increase access year-round." (pg. 22)
- "*Consider redesign options for both Pekich and Heartside Parks to best meet community need.*" (pg. 25)

Have any community engagement efforts resulted in requests for Heartside Park to become an urban campground?

Comments provided in community engagement sessions have not yielded requests for Heartside Park to become an urban campground.

Is the City considering turning Heartside Park into an urban campground?

No, the City does not plan to turn Heartside Park into a campground. Over the last few weeks, City officials have received written and oral comments encouraging that Heartside Park be designated an urban campground in response to homelessness. While this input is appreciated, the City does not see this as a solution to homelessness and will proceed with planned park improvements based on input from the community engagement processes described above.

Park improvements totaling \$500,000-\$600,000 will begin in summer 2021. Projects will include:

- New year-round restroom facility that will include self-cleaning infrastructure;
- Improvements to allow for more community events;
- New drinking fountain and water bottle fillers;
- Improved bench seating and gathering spaces; and
- Improved pathways and walking access.

Is overnight camping allowed in City parks?

No, it is against City ordinance to stay overnight in a City park.

What are the State of Michigan campground rules? How did they impact the homeless encampment at Heartside Park?

[State of Michigan Rules & Regulations regarding campgrounds](#) – A license from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy is required to operate a campground in the State of Michigan.

Per the Kent County Health Department, the encampment at Heartside Park was in violation of State of Michigan campground rules. Below are rules for campgrounds under the Michigan Public Health Code. Many were not observed in the encampment.

- A campground cannot be located where it will be detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare
- Sites must be planned regarding size, location, arrangement, marking, drainage, and occupancy
- Potable water must be provided, including in primitive campgrounds, in appropriate ratio with number of sites
- A campground manager is required
- Sewage and wastewater control must be in place to prevent pollution or public health and safety concerns
- Clean and sanitary conditions and good order must be maintained
- Garbage and refuse disposal must be provided and insects kept under control

What unsafe and unsanitary conditions were found at the Heartside Park encampment?

A December 18 assessment of Heartside Park by the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) identified significant health risks to the individuals staying there, and to the community, including dangerous fire and fume inhalation hazards, inadequate ventilation, improper disposal of drug paraphernalia, open human defecation and urination, litter and burning of trash, non-compliance with COVID-safe protocols, soiled and damaged clothing and bedding, and general unsanitary conditions. These risks were combined with the forecast of sustained below freezing temperatures.

Lack of proper food storage and preparation facilities, and of a potable water source, contributed to the unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

Doesn't the CDC recommend encampments due to COVID?

No government agency advocates for encampments as a solution to homelessness. In light of the ongoing pandemic, the CDC did issue [Interim Guidance on Unsheltered Homelessness](#). While that guidance does allow for encampments, it provides officials flexibility based on local circumstances and acknowledges, *"Outdoor settings may allow people to increase physical distance between themselves and others. However, sleeping outdoors often does not provide protection from the environment, adequate access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, or connection to services and healthcare. The balance of risks should be considered for each individual experiencing unsheltered homelessness."*

When conditions such as poor sanitation, fire hazards, asphyxiation risks from carbon monoxide buildup, and exposure to harsh winter elements are factored in, a congregate setting with strong, [Department of Housing and Urban Development approved](#), COVID-19 mitigation protocols is preferable to allowing individuals to remain unsheltered.

Additional resources:

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Meeting-Winter-Shelter-Needs-and-Mitigating-Health-Risks.pdf>

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Alternative-Approaches-to-Winter-Sheltering-During-COVID-19.pdf>

Additional information regarding grant funds used to build Heartside Park:

Heartside Park was built using funds from a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) project grant, which requires that it be used for recreational purposes for the general public.

Amenities built with grant funds include:

- Restroom, gazebo, site prep/amenities/utilities, basketball court, playground with surfacing, water feature, walkways, landscaping, irrigation, and trails

Grant agreement regulations include:

- The park and all facilities must be open to the public at all times on equal and reasonable terms.
- The City would need to obtain prior written authorization from MDNR before implementing a change that significantly alters the park or its facilities, including but not limited to discontinuing use of the park or making a significant change in its recreational use.

What is the City of Grand Rapids' philosophy toward housing and homelessness?

The City of Grand Rapids is committed to a Housing First approach, which is an evidence-based practice to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements ([National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)). The City is committed to developing, supporting, and promoting solutions that create a direct impact in reducing homelessness in our community and supporting individuals in need. We believe that housing is the answer to homelessness demonstrated by our history of supporting homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing efforts. We also believe this is a community-wide effort that requires dedicated and results-oriented partnerships.

Are encampments solutions to homelessness?

Homeless encampments are not solutions to homelessness. We believe *housing* is the solution to homelessness and are committed to continuing to work with community partners to increase housing availability for vulnerable populations.

What is the City's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)?

Currently, there are four members on the HOT team – two police officers and two fire personnel – who work in shifts from 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Two of these individuals have worked as first responders in the Heartside neighborhood for many years. The City also contracts with Network180 to add two social workers and two addiction and recovery specialists to the team. The HOT team only responds to issues of street homelessness. The team works to build personal relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness to better assist them in meeting their urgent needs, obtaining services, and connecting to housing solutions.

How can members of the community access housing services?

Any individual or family who is experiencing housing instability (homeless or soon to be homeless) should call 2-1-1. This is essential to ensure persons get connected quickly to agencies in the community with housing and shelter funds to assist them. This is also important because the recovery funds and other federal resources available in our community for prevention, re-housing and temporary shelter require a “coordinated entry” approach to accessing these resources.

Is emergency shelter available for persons experiencing homelessness?

Safe, sanitary shelter capacity is available in the community, as well as street outreach and services for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing. Any individual or family who is experiencing housing instability (homeless or soon to be homeless) should call 2-1-1. Community members can help persons experiencing homelessness by referring them to 2-1-1.



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 24, 2021

TO: DGRI Board of Advisors

FROM: Tim Kelly, AICP
DGRI President & CEO

SUBJECT: Item #5 – FY21 Priority Project Updates – Winter Activation

Among the adopted key projects and local advocacy objectives for DGRI in FY21 was the deployment of winter activation projects to drive foot traffic to Downtown during the winter season. DGRI staff will present an update and overview of the ongoing World of Winter Festival, which runs through February 28 (not some installations will remain into March). Among the upcoming highlights are:

- DJ AB at Hybycozo's in Ah Nab Awen Park
- Black History Walking Tours
- Circle Theater Pop Up at 555 Monroe
- Seasonal Wonders Projection Show at Lyon Square
- Frozen Disc Slam Tournament
- "Snow Moon" Tribal Stories at Manidoo Bawating and Hybycozo

Updated information, including a map and schedule of activities can be found at worldofwintergr.com.

The best daily information for downtown Grand Rapids, MI

Information
changes
daily
to reflect
downtown
activities!

Downtown Ambassador & Hotel Concierge Downtown Information Guide Card



Go to website: www.downtowngr.org/xxxxxxxxxx
or scan QR Code (real-time information)

for the best daily information of what's open today downtown:
Restaurants & Bars with food specials, **addresses, websites and phone numbers** links on devices with HTML - Retail Outlets
Museums hours of operation, Arena and Convention Center information
along with movie theater guide showing movie times

Scan this:



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by the staff at the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
aka Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. (DGRI) - city of Grand Rapids, MI

Michigan Flashcard - Scott Atchison
PO Box 1235
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
NativeGR@gmail.com 616-293-9056



Downtown
Grand Rapids, MI

Information City!

This card will show you
how to access the best
downtown information of
what is open today.
You will be able to see
all restaurants and bars
open downtown today.
We have the best local
information.

What are the
restaurants in
walking
distance?

We have an hour
before we go to
the airport. Let
me grab my cell
phone. This is
great! Better than
any other city!
Look, links!

Scan
this:

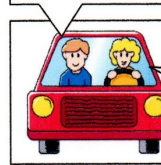


Hotel
Concierge

I am a Downtown
Ambassador. Here is
the information card.



Maybe that Downtown
Ambassador can help.



Place
Stamp
Here

Where
should
we
park?

I guess there is no
information center
downtown according to
this map.



Forward to: DDA Board

cc: Downtown Stakeholders

USPS please deliver to:
DGRI
Tim Kelly & Staff
29 Pearl St. NW - Suite 100
Grand Rapids MI 49503

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aka Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. (DGRI) - city of Grand Rapids, MI

