

Virtual Meeting Instruction

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBOR NETWORK ADVISORY

Hello,

As many of you know, recent restrictions and mandates have been issued in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19. For this reason, and for the safety and wellbeing of our members and employees, we would like to continue to move GR Forward through virtual meetings.

We have decided to use Microsoft Teams for video/phone conferencing for all upcoming board and alliance meetings. Teams has many exciting features including screen sharing, recording, live captions, file sharing, and more. Below are instructions on how to access your upcoming virtual meeting.



MICROSOFT TEAMS

How to Join the Meeting:

1. It is recommended to download the App (but not necessary):
 - a. [Apple Devices](#).
 - b. [Android Devices](#).
2. When you click the following link, it will prompt you to choose: Launch App, Download App, or Join by the web. [Click here to access the July 9th Team meeting.](#)
3. Allow access to your mic and camera (this is very important for you to join the conversation).
4. Prior to joining the meeting, it will require you type your name. Make sure your mic and audio are on and click join.

Virtual Meeting Etiquette:

- Test the app and all technology (including camera/video, Wi-Fi, and audio) before the meeting.
- Always have a contingency plan, you may want to download the app to a second device.
- Mute your microphone when you're not speaking.
- Start a comment by saying your name. Not everyone may recognize your voice. This practice also facilitates the work of the person who is taking minutes.
- Be aware of your surroundings: make sure your background is professional and work appropriate.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please email mmcdaniel@downtowngr.org. Thank you!

Best,
Mandy



Mandy McDaniel
Administrative Assistant
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

29 Pearl NW, Suite 1
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
P: 616 . 719 . 4610

AGENDA



DOWNTOWN NEIGHBOR NETWORK

Advisory

Members:

Amy Skentzos • Christopher Billmeier • Daniel Drent • Drew Terwee • Eddie Tadlock • Jane Reynolds • Kathy Steindler • Kelli Jo Peltier • Latesha Lipscomb • Laurie Craft • Mark Tangen • Michael Dorney • Myric Harris • Rose Martinez White • Wilma Banks •

July 9, 2020

11:30pm- 1:00pm

[Microsoft Teams](#)

- | | | |
|----|--|------------------|
| 1. | Call to order/ introductions | Kelli Jo Peltier |
| 2. | Approval of minutes | Kelli Jo Peltier |
| 3. | Update on DNN Advisory committee description review | Kathy Steindler |
| 4. | Pedestrian Safety Timeline/ Framework Feedback | Annamarie Buller |
| 5. | Downtown Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly Near Neighborhood Report beginning in August• DNN Website RFP• DNN and Near Neighborhood Monthly Downtown Engagement• Upcoming DGRI events and programming | Annamarie Buller |
| 6. | Advisory member discussion | Kelli Jo Peltier |
| 7. | Public comment | |
| 8. | Next meeting on August 6, 2020 | |
| 9. | Adjournment | |

The DNN exists to foster a community of downtown neighbors that are connected, informed and empowered to improve downtown living.





Downtown Neighbor Network Advisory

June 4, 2020

1. Call to order: Ms. Buller called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.
2. DNN Members Present: Rose Martinez White, Wilma Banks, Daniel Drent, Amy Skentzos, Kellie Jo Peltier, Latesha Lipscomb, Eddie Tadlock, Jane Reynolds, Kathy Steindler, Laurie Craft, Mark Tangen, Michael Dorney, and Drew Terwee.

DNN Members Absent: Myric Harris, and Christopher Billmeier.

Others Present: Annamarie Buller, Mark Miller, Melvin Eledge, and Mandy McDaniel (DGRI Staff).

3. Approval of DNN Advisory Minutes - May 2020
Michael Dorney, *supported by Kathy Steindler, motioned to approve May 07, 2020 Meeting Minutes. None opposed. Motion passed.*
4. Set meeting for DNN Advisory committee roles and responsibilities
Ms. Peltier stated the DGRI office is not available for onsite meetings. For those that said they would participate, Kathy, Mike, Mark, and Drew who volunteered and anyone else who would like to join them, should plan a remote meeting. Mr. Dorney stated we could meet at his home and practice safe distancing in the back yard on Tuesday the 9th at 4 pm. Mr. Drent stated he is also interested in helping.
5. Wayfinding RFP
Mr. Eledge stated we released an RFP about a month ago for proposals to update our existing Wayfinding System downtown. We received 23 proposals. The steering committee evaluated each proposal assessing schedules, cost, diversity of the team, etc. We received the information yesterday and have it narrowed down to 3 firms. The hope is to select one firm by the end of today for us to recommend to the DDA next week Wednesday. Once it is approved, we will enter into a contract with the chosen firm, we would hope to have a plan in place that has a design for the wayfinding, deployment, and asset maintenance plan. Then the beginning of next year put out a proposal for fabrication and deployment for Spring of 2021.

6. Heartside Restroom Update

Mr. Eledge stated the corner of Weston and Division Avenue are now under construction for the Loo site. We are still on track for the installation by July 14th. There will be some electrical work that needs to be completed and will be fully open by the 24th of July. Ms. Craft asked if there was any safety factors regarding COVID-19 and if that work is assigned to the ambassadors Mr. Eledge stated the operation plan is to have it cleaned 3 times a day, morning, afternoon, and evening by the ambassadors. We will also be posting the ambassador phone number in case it needs to be cleaned between the 3 designated cleaning times. Ms. Buller stated we will open this up and learn as we go.

7. HOT Team/ Community Engagement

Mr. Eledge stated the city has released a Homeless Outreach Task (HOT) force to help with the challenges and solution to the challenges relayed. During the start of the Stay at Home order, the HOT team placed hand washing stations and porta potties around downtown. There are a total of 7 locations. They are working on next steps to discuss things moving forward. Ms. Eledge stated he was recently added to the HOT team committee to find a way to connect the Ambassadors and DGRI to the HOT team. Currently, there are HOT team members working on a combined/shared resource binder for the ambassadors, police department, fire department, and EMS so that if they come across someone in need, they will have a huge list of resources at their disposal.

Ms. Craft asked what is the goal of this group? Is it connecting people to resources? Mr. Eledge stated yes and there is a real desire to do project base work around that. They are looking for more opportunities to do things like adding porta potties and hand washing stations. What are some challenges that they can meet and by doing so by working with city departments? What are somethings that this team could do to help support the homeless community. Ms. Craft stated the goal in my mind is to make sure we aren't enabling and making it more comfortable. Is there something where we could develop more relations and doing the outreach that needs to be done to help get people from homeless to housed. Mr. Eledge stated once the team can reconvene their will be more updates. Ms. Buller stated it is also a question if the city will continue the HOT team long term since it was created in response to COVID.

8. Pedestrian Safety Enhancement

a. Michigan and Bridge Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Mr. Miller shared a slide of the Bridge and Michigan crossing which is now fully operational and constructed. A median was added in and we will be adding landscape to the planters soon. On the opposite side of the bridge there is a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB), you can push the button and it will flash, signaling for drivers to slow down. It is also solar powered. We are seeing mixed results and hope to condition drivers better that it is a designated crosswalk.

b. Jefferson Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Mr. Miller stated the next crosswalk is on Jefferson. We requested funding for this project at our last DDA meeting in May and two days. We worked with St. Mary's and

a consultant and were able to have half of it implemented within 2 days of approval. There is 2 crosswalks, the north crosswalk on Jefferson was reconstructed and the RRFB signs were added. The north crosswalk is completed, and they are now working on the south crosswalk located between two BRT stations. The south is more interesting because they are going to place a temporary median, like the bus stop on Fulton street, to provide pedestrian refuge area. The crosswalk is already there, and they are going to buffer it with the 2 medians soon.

c. Bike Safety and Infrastructure Improvements

Mr. Miller stated we are going to the DDA next week with further funding requests for additional pedestrian safety improvements. They are all crosswalk enhancements or improvements. We would like to install RRFBs at three different intersections, which are at Monroe and Campau, S. Division and McConnell, and the third is a midblock crossing near Mary Free Bed. Our funding for the 1st phase is for the design work, so we will support that effort and once it is design, we can start the implantation. These are easy to install since they are solar powered, we don't have to run electricity to them.

Ms. Buller stated the reason we are bringing this information to you is because these are projects that have been advocated for multiple years. Hopefully this group can help speed these processes up in the future.

Ms. Buller asked members who has utilized the crosswalks how they believe the enhanced crosswalks are working? Mr. Terwee stated when they put the crosswalk on Fulton, it gives people walking across the street a sense of safety, however, there is no warning to drivers that they must stop for pedestrians. Ms. Craft stated there is some education/training that needs to occur, and signage should be added to warn drivers. Ms. Reynolds asked why there isn't a sign posted that it is local law to stop for pedestrians. Why is that not part of the installation? Mr. Tadlock stated cars do not slow down at all. He recommends placing a motorcycle cop in these locations and give out tickets. Mr. Miller stated we are trying to accomplish little wins and moving the narrative. He suggested to take these ideas/concerns and advocate for even more changes.

d. Pedestrian Safety Agenda for Action Draft Documents

Ms. Buller stated she will email members the Downtown Pedestrian Safety Agenda for Action Planning timeline. This was our first draft for an agenda for action planning. The goal for June is to establish City of GR data partners, develop a schedule and receive feedback, engage with near neighborhood association leadership, and celebrate pedestrian safety victories on social media. The Goal for July is to overview key background literature with DNN, create a presentation to share best practices, continue to ask for feedback and ideas, set a public meeting, and consider a survey for additional feedback. In August our focus will be the structure the agenda for action, identifying 12 action items. By September we hope to have a draft agenda for review.

9. Social Zones

Mr. Miller stated once Europe began to reopen their economy, they created gastro pub zones. We started talking about it as an organization considering how we would safely reopen the economy. Since April, we began having conversations with the city, the chamber, and local business owners. We realized within a few days it started to become the topic across urban areas. We were able to procure tables and chairs to have them ready to go for deployment.

On May 21st, the North American City Traffic Organization (NACTO) produced a manual for Streets for Pandemic Response. We locally referred to them as “social zones”. In the diagrams presented, it displayed different ways you can convert the street space including school streets, dining street, market streets, etc. We knew once restaurants could reopen, they were not going to be able to work at full capacity. Many restaurants would fail if they only operate at 30-50% capacity, that is why we are expanding into the streets. Social zones consist of public property and turning them into private use for restaurants or retailers to use. Some social zones we would like to open for physical activity.

10. Member Discussion

11. Public Comment

None

12. Next Meeting Dates: July 09, 2020 at 11:30 am

13. Adjournment

Ms. Buller adjourned the meeting at 1:21 pm.

Minutes taken by:

Mandy McDaniel

Administrative Assistant

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

Notes from DNN Advisory Job Description meeting taken by Kathy Steindler:

Below is the DNN Advisory Job Description. This represents the consensus of the group who gathered on June 9, 2020 for thoughtful exchange of ideas. I acknowledge the combined efforts of Kathy Steindler, Daniel Drent, Drew Terwee, Jane Reynolds, Kelly Jo Peltier, Mark Tangen, and Michael Dorney.

DNN Advisory Job Description

As a self-directed volunteer group, but in alignment with Downtown Grand Rapids Inc., advocate for quality of life issues and positive downtown experiences, propose resolution and activate solutions. Commit to serve on a DNN-directed Advocacy Sub-Committee, reporting to the DNN Advisory Group as a whole.

The desire is to present this job description to the DNN Advisory Group as a whole and then discuss moving forward with this plan, determining three issues we want to tackle and creating sub-committees for those issues.

2.2 SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT IMPROVE DOWNTOWN LIVING FOR EXISTING RESIDENTS & ATTRACT NEW DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS

Downtown Grand Rapids's most valuable asset is its people. As the Downtown population grows steadily and residents are turning districts and areas into neighborhoods, local leadership is tasked with ensuring that civic infrastructure, programs, and services are improving in step with this evolution. The following strategies should be considered to continue cultivating growth and encourage Downtown residents to put down roots.

FOSTER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY TIES DOWNTOWN

The numbers of people who participated in the GR Forward process in various ways speak for themselves: Grand Rapidians are eager for opportunities to be a part of the future of Downtown Grand Rapids. Community members who participated in the process also spoke for themselves: at the public open house, public forums, and other engagement events, the planning team regularly heard individuals voice the need for continued community engagement and input beyond the horizon of the planning process itself. City leaders are encouraged to create regular and structural opportunities for the community to be a part of shaping the future of Downtown and the Grand River.



>>Support efforts to establish a Downtown residents council

Many Grand Rapids neighborhoods have formalized civic groups to establish formal representation within city-level dialogues and leadership structure among neighborhood residents. Efforts recently begun to assemble a Downtown residents council should be supported in order to create more opportunities for community building and social interaction among Downtown residents, many of whom are living in disconnected pockets of the Downtown area; and establish a venue for community dialogue about change Downtown. Among the roles the council may decide to take on, it may consider ways of welcoming new residents, creating a communications infrastructure to facilitate information sharing specific to Downtown among residents, and ensuring that the views of Downtown residents are being represented in major decisions by Downtown leadership.

“Having lived in Heritage Hill for 27 years and loving the “neighborhood.” I would love to see the same “community” environment shared with Downtown residents.”

- Public forum participant

>>Educate residents about ways to be engaged in discussions around change Downtown

Outside of a comprehensive planning process, how will Downtown residents be able to continue taking part in guiding change Downtown?

- > Once established, the regular meetings of a Downtown residents council would act as appropriate venues for the City and Downtown leadership to engage the community in opportunities for input in decisions and priorities when appropriate.
- > Though some long-time residents may be familiar with channels of civic engagement, Downtown’s growing base of new residents will need some orientation. Grand Rapidians care deeply about the future of their City and form online discussion boards around development, transportation and green space among other topics. The opportunity is to spread this knowledge further and empower others across the City to better understand, and engage in, local planning and design issues. One example of this kind of initiative is Philadelphia’s Citizen’s Planning Institute [CPI], the education and outreach arm of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. CPI offers courses and events designed to inform civic-minded community members about planning principles and municipal procedures around development and City decision making, including how to engage in opportunities for public input. Other cities pursue this idea outside of City government relying instead




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on local non-profits and development agencies. The City, DGRI and their partners should consider tapping into local expertise to develop a program focused on citizenship education. More informed and engaged citizens would benefit Downtown and communities across the City as well. As with the Citizen's Planning Institute, accommodations must be made to ensure the broadest participation possible across incomes and neighborhoods. CPI tracks participation in their programs in order to identify and address gaps in their services.

Downtown Resident Steering Committee
Downtown Neighbor Network Recommendation
9/5/2019

1. Background:

The GR Forward Downtown and River Activation Plan identified the goal to create a downtown neighborhood that is home to a diverse population. To that end, DGRI looks to support initiatives that improve downtown living for existing residents and attract new downtown residents in order to foster civic engagement and strengthen community ties downtown. GR Forward specifically identifies the opportunity to establish a downtown resident council. In early 2018, an ad-hoc Downtown Resident Steering Committee was formed to explore the creation of a stand alone organization that would represent downtown neighbors.

The Downtown Resident Steering Committee was constituted to represent various viewpoints and perspectives on the unique challenges and opportunities of living in or near downtown Grand Rapids. Although DGRI convened the group, it was made explicit that there was not a predetermined outcome and that the group had the authority to determine if there was need or desire for a downtown neighborhood group and what form that group might take. The group began with an extensive “data dive” to better understand who was living in downtown, what groups currently (or potentially) exist in and near downtown, what concerns residents have, how is downtown changing, and what type of organization might be the best fit to represent the unique voice of downtown living.

2. Process:

- a) Recruitment of Steve Faber, Byrum and Fisk to facilitate the independent process for the Downtown Resident Steering Committee, supported by DGRI Stakeholder Engagement Specialist Annamarie Buller
- b) Research and Data:
 - i. Resident survey
 - ii. Housing analysis
 - iii. Scan of organizations and associations
 - iv. Focus group discussion with existing neighborhoods (November 2017, April 2018)
- c) Scenario Planning: No growth, slow growth, high growth
- d) Structure Pros/Cons: Nonprofit vs Joint Venture
- e) Heartside residents reorganizing the Heartside Neighborhood Association (HNA) propose expansion.
- f) Downtown Resident Steering Committee Recommendations Engagement

3. Mission/Vision/Guiding Principles:

Mission:

The DNN exists to foster a community of downtown neighbors that are connected, informed and empowered to improve downtown living.

Vision:

The DNN envisions a neighborhood that is vibrant and culturally diverse, active, safe and full of opportunity and experiences unique to downtown living.

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Guiding Principles:

Accessible & Inclusive – We desire to be a network that is open to all neighbors

Empowering – We desire to be a network that supports downtown neighbors and provides an avenue to advance collective interests

Collaborative – We desire to be a network that brings people and groups together across boundaries

Equitable – We desire to be a network that is intentional about listening to our neighbors and elevating the voices of those who have been historically marginalized

Unique – We desire to be a network that embraces the peculiarities of living downtown and convey that perspective with the broader community

Key Programs:

Improved communications and greater awareness

- **Communication** - share information relevant to living downtown
 - Identify neighbors who want to join the Downtown Neighborhood Network
 - Outreach to building owners and property managers
 - Implement a communication tool that allows for information to be pushed out
 - Implement a communication tool that allows for information to be pulled in/ feedback
 - Find opportunities to tell the stories of downtown neighbors
 - Develop a brand and marketing materials for DNN

Increased participation in events, surveys and committees

- **Events** – organize events that bring downtown neighbors together
 - 4-6 events a year
 - Event opportunities for education and welcoming new neighbors
 - Feature Downtown and near neighborhood assets
 - Recruitment events to grow the DNN

Increased opportunities to inform policy and projects impacting

- **Advocacy** – provide opportunity for downtown neighbors to speak into and influence decisions that impact their quality of life
 - Conduct an annual survey of downtown neighbors to identify trends and issues
 - Develop tools to help neighbors organize and navigate systems
 - Provide a space for issues\ opportunities to “bubble up” that need action

Downtown Resident Steering Committee
Downtown Neighbor Network Recommendation
9/5/2019
DNN Structure:

- An affinity group/ network for people who identify as downtown neighbors but may already be in a neighborhood
- Downtown **Resident** Network name change to Downtown **Neighbor** Network
- The DNN has blurred boundaries to be more inclusive- including Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods in its boundaries
- Work collaboratively with DGRI and near neighborhoods

Governance Structure: the Downtown Neighbor Network Advisory

The proposal is that the DNN Advisory will live within DGRI for at least two years. The DNN Advisory is most aligned to help the DGRI's Goal 2 Alliance achieve their outcomes, however, there is a desire for the DNN to exist outside the hierarchy of being under any specific committee. This will give the DNN Advisory a level of autonomy and recognize that the voice of downtown neighbors is valuable to all DGRI committees. The DNN Advisory may establish ad hoc committees to direct their work as need.

DGRI Alliance Representation:

The DNN Advisory will present to each Goal Alliance annually (winter each year)

- The DNN's Advisory Committee members will:
 - Live in or in a near neighborhood that is Downtown adjacent
 - Live in a multi-unit building
 - Be a mix of renters/owners
 - Embody values of the DNN
 - Represent full diversity
- The DNN Advisory Committee Recruitment process:
 - September 2018-Outreach to property owners to solicit residents to apply
 - November 1- DNN Event to announce structure and recruit board members
 - October 2018-Online application/ paper application for engagement events
 - November 21-Deadline for applications due by Thanksgiving
- The DNN Advisory Committee will be determined by:
 - Staff of DGRI
 - Members of the Downtown Resident Steering Committee
 - Representatives from the DGRI Goal Alliances

Partnerships:

- DGRI to provide staffing and direction
- Neighborhood Associations – interaction with near neighborhoods
- City of Grand Rapids

Downtown Resident Steering Committee
Downtown Neighbor Network Recommendation
9/5/2019

Timeline:

Year One Milestones- October 2018- October 2019

Fall 2018

- Final engagement with near neighborhoods, City Commissioners, Committee and Chair recruitment, DGRI Board Approval
- Data enhancement
 - Outreach target downtown properties, condo leadership and property management each month

Winter 2019

- Selection of DNN Advisory
- DNN Announcement and Recruitment Event
- January 2019-First convening of the DNN Advisory
- January / February 2019-Focus on Board Governance for DNN
- January/ February 2019-Update and overview, planning with the 5 DGRI Alliances
- Bring communication tools online
 - First monthly newsletter with announcement of first meeting
- Downtown/ Near Downtown Resident Survey updated and deployed

Spring 2019

- Identify project opportunities shaped by the survey and issues identified throughout the year, look to budgeting and planning for 2020
- Events
 - Decision to continue to convene DRN Events Committee or reorganize
 - Building previews, education events, speakers etc.
 - Set remaining events for the year
 - Mix, Mingle and Share 2019 date tentatively set-April 10, 2019

Year Two Milestones- October 2019- October 2020

Fall 2019

- Evaluate year 1 progress
- Data enhancement
 - Outreach target downtown properties, condo leadership and property management each month
- November 2019 Event/Recruitment next wave of committee members

Winter 2020

- December 2019-Selection of new DNN Advisory members
- January 2020-First convening of the new DNN Advisory/ Strategic Planning
- January/ February 2020-Update and overview, planning with the 5 DGRI Alliances
- February/ March 2020- Downtown/ Near Downtown Survey updated and deployed
- Events 4-6 per year
- Issue advocacy, project implementation

Spring 2020

- Mix, Mingle and Share with your Downtown Neighbors
- Begin evaluation and make recommendation for the future of the DNN Advisory in 2021

Downtown Pedestrian Safety Agenda for Action Planning Timeline:

July 2020

- Gather materials & understanding
 - Local incident data
 - Relevant projects in pipeline (bike share, scooters, pedestrian safety improvements at specific intersections)
- Develop process schedule/expectations with DNN leaders
- Engagement with near Neighborhood Association leadership- what are the near neighborhoods doing? How effective are current interventions?
- Celebrate Pedestrian Safety victories on social media (IE: Bridge and Michigan, Jefferson Street)

August 2020

- Overview key background literature with DNN & “The why” (GR>>>, City Vision Zero, Streetspace guidelines, etc)
- Creation of a presentation that can be easily shared, continued to share best practice articles and information from GR Forward and Streetspace guidelines
- Education w/ DNN on existing recommended actions- best practice in some key cities (ie:Oakland 70% streets shut down during covid)
- Current thinking and events reflective of this moment during Covid 19
 - Heightened awareness of how people exist in streets, are things safe?
 - The economic development that equity in use of are city creates (Bike Share, scooters, more varied users on the street, change cultural habits)
- Engagement with near Neighborhood Association leadership- share the background and ask for ideas and feedback?
- Set public meeting to hear feedback
- Consider survey to help get additional feedback

September 2020

- Work to structure of Agenda of Action
- Public engagement comment/ survey events and deployment
- Inspirational speaker?

October 2020

- Present DRAFT Agenda for review/affirmation by DNN

November 2020

- Publish/present Agenda