



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Downtown Grand Rapids Ambassador 2017 Annual Report



Program Overview

Started in 2013 the Downtown Ambassador program is designed to be a friendly and welcoming team that patrols Downtown sidewalks and other areas of the public realm for the benefit of residents, visitors, workers and anyone who needs a helping hand.

In 2015 the Downtown Ambassador program began providing cleaning and beautification services in addition to the hospitality services.

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Hospitality & Engagement

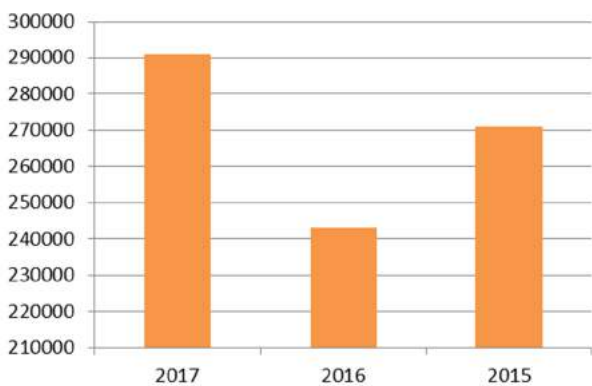
In 2017 the Ambassador team brought their engagement statistics back in line with previous years. In 2016, the team experienced difficulties recruiting staff that aligned with the vision and mission the team has for downtown and as a result our engagement suffered. However a complete overhaul in recruiting resulted in several excellent superstar ambassadors joining the team.

We participated in several events in 2017 including; *Art Prize, Light Up Downtown, Movies in the Park, Relax at Rosa, The 2017 Auto Show, Wine, Beer and Food Festival, Rollin' Out and the Santa Parade.*

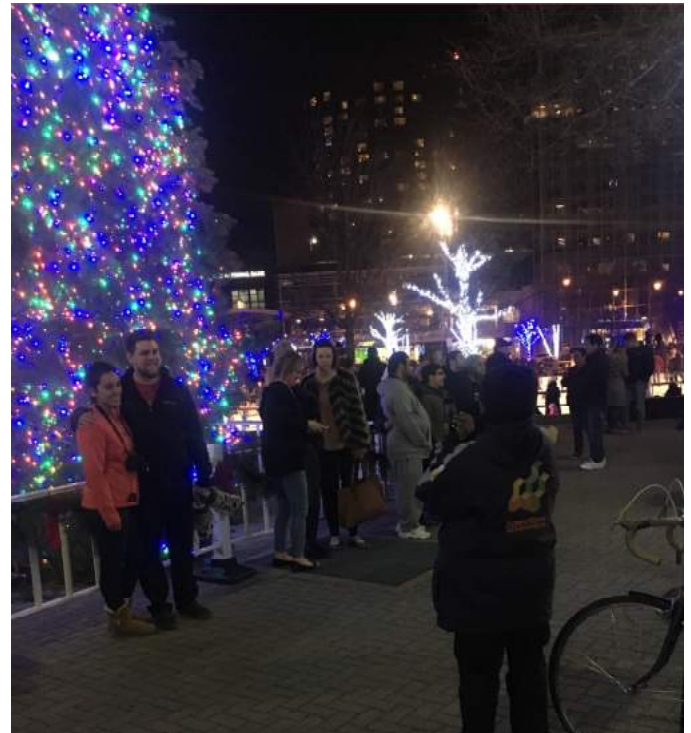


Marcia provides first aid to a pedestrian on Monroe Center shortly after they fell and injured their hand.

Total Hospitality & Engagement



Hospitality & Engagement	Activity	2017	2016	2015
	Business Contact	2,079	1,473	3,383
	Motorist Assist	131	163	91
	Observation - Fighting	939	221	484
	Outreach Contact	5,756	14,996	33,230
	PA - Directions	11,890	13,846	23,024
	PA - Information	40,925	37,585	55,775
	PA - Other	205,882	154,340	100,912
	PA - Program Information	9,986	12,006	24,778
	Panhandling - Aggressive	1,244	233	1,564
	Panhandling - Passive	1,686	429	1,123
	Request for Fire/EMS	43	228	250
	Request for Police	13	32	128
	Safety Escort	1,244	2,248	15,993
	Sidewalk Violation	8,875	5,002	5,936
	Suspicious Package	18	44	446
	Suspicious Person	302	165	3,465
	Umbrella Escorts	81	76	482
	Total Activity	291094	243087	271064



Talina takes pictures of couples at the Holiday tree installed near the Rosa Parks Circle Ice Rink.

Beautification

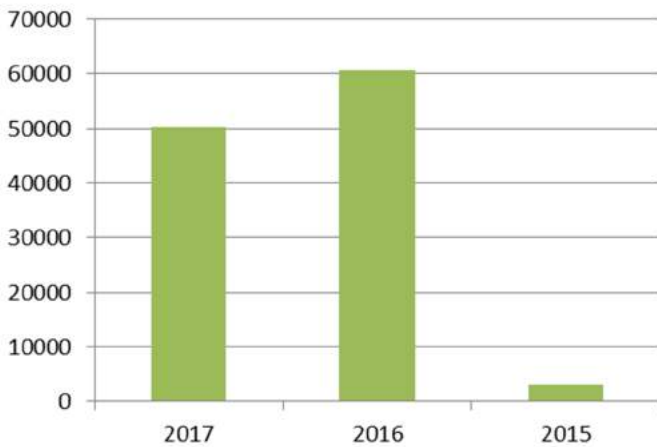
The beautification team worked hard to maintain the cleanliness of downtown. We focused our efforts during the peak season on removing weeds and graffiti from the district. As a result we removed over 12,000 weeds and over 3,000 instances of graffiti/vandalism.

The team also worked diligently during big events, like *Art Prize*, to stay on top of the trash and refuse needs especially in key areas like Rosa Parks Circle. We removed over 15,000 bags of trash in 2017 an increase by almost 3,000 bags from the previous year.



Ariel uses a variety of tools to remove weeds from Commerce and Williams Ave.

Total Beautification Activity



	Activity	2017	2016	2015
Beautification	Biohazard Clean Up	4,800	NA	NA
	Graffiti - Removed	3,323	6,915	1,250
	Planters Watered	4,533	18,042	NA
	Power Washing (block faces)	276	226	NA
	Snow Removal	9,653	11,419	42
	Trash (Bags collected)	15,616	12,503	1,681
	Weed Abatement	12,043	11,477	NA
	Cigarette Butts Recycled	523,078	172,910	NA
	Total Beautification Activity	50,244	60582	2973



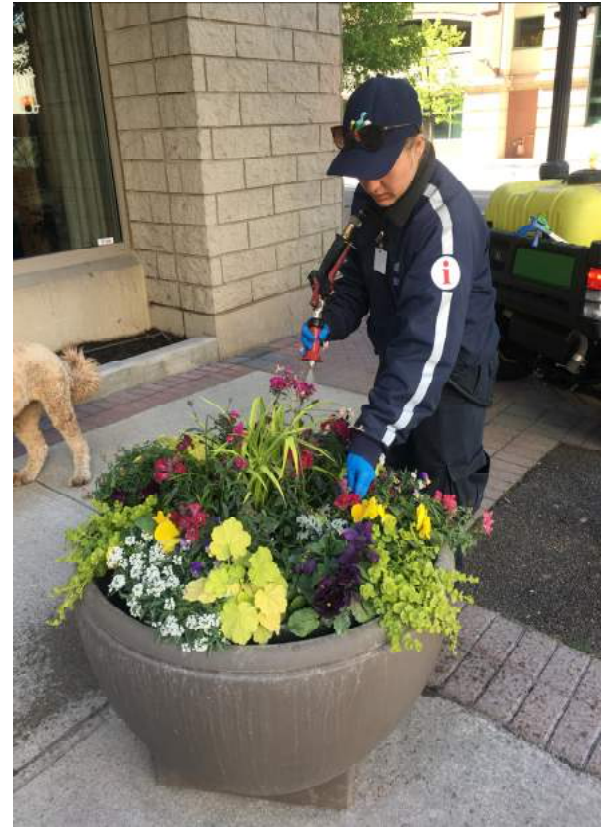
Diana uses graffiti remover to take off spray paint from a newspaper box on Ionia Ave.

Horticulture



2017 was an amazingly successful year for the horticulture team. We began working with a new vendor, Micandy Gardens, to provide our plants/flowers and planting services and we couldn't be happier. Micandy demonstrated, *right away*, they understood the unique challenges of working with plant materials in urban areas and not only provided high quality plants but over the top customer service as well.

In addition to switching vendors we also deployed over 30 new planters on the Ottawa street corridor to bring additional greenery to the downtown and expanded the off season planters (November through March) by working with Micandy to install additional Winter plantings in the additional planter beds deployed on Division Ave. North of Fulton Street.



Special Projects & Initiatives

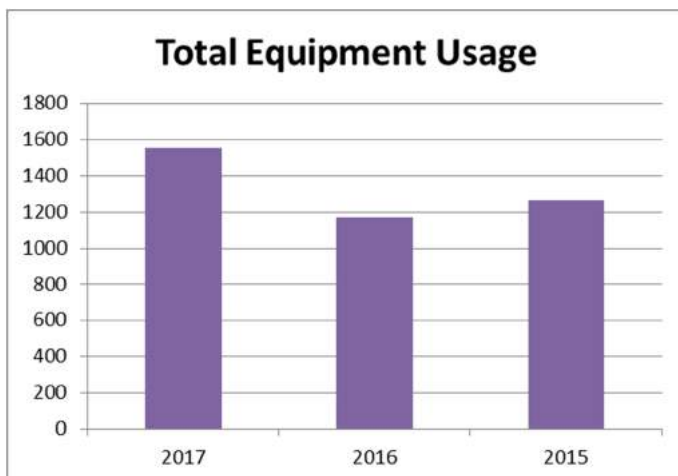
2017 was a big year for Ambassador led projects and initiatives. Our biggest accomplishment was being awarded a \$10,000 grant from Keep America Beautiful to significantly expand our cigarette butt collection efforts as well as work with DGRI to develop an outreach program to provide education and bring awareness about the cigarette recycling program to the general public. The funds allowed the ambassador program to install 100 additional urns throughout the downtown which resulted in the collection of over 500,000 cigarette butts in its first year alone!

In addition to deploying additional cigarette urns the team also deployed 15 additional dog waste bag dispensers in key locations throughout the downtown.

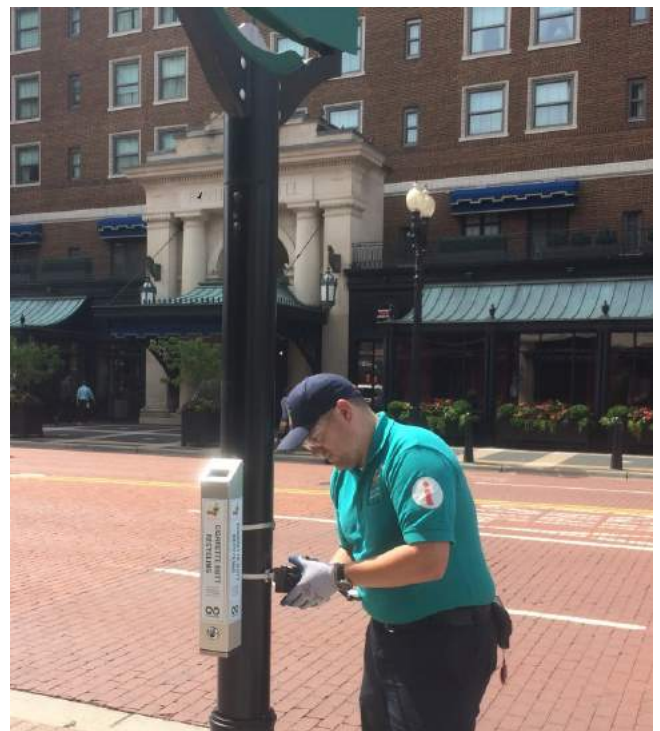
The Ambassador team also worked with DGRI to acquire additional trash cans to deploy throughout the district as well as inserts to enhance the overall aesthetics of the trash cans as well. To date the Ambassador team has increased the amount of refuse collection infrastructure by 65% throughout the downtown.



Sean is having a great time cleaning out the ATLV after using it to mechanically clean downtown.



Equipment Usage	Activity	2017	2016	2015
	ATLV Hours	186.25	267	NA
	Backpack Blower (hours)	119	213	8
	Bicycle (miles)	652.2	460.3	1038.65
	Billy Goat Hours	159	152	8
	Segway Hours	438	82.25	209.5
	Total Equipment Usage	1554.45	1174.55	1264.15



Melvin installs one of 100 newly acquired cigarette urns purchased with the Keep America Beautiful grant.

Highlights

Ariel sprays black touch up paint on the base of a *Dash* stop sign to cover up a graffiti tag.



The ambassador team is ready to deploy more new trash cans into downtown! To date the ambassador team has increased trash infrastructure by 65% throughout the downtown.



Joel works to pressure wash the sidewalk beneath US-131 near Cherry and Grandville. Joel and Steve power washed over 250 blocks in downtown in 2017!



Erin works to clean out the existing trash infrastructure just before Art Prize.

Highlights



Jared provides information about the Ambassador program to pedestrians after making a service call to Biggby coffee.



Shannon submits a maintenance request for broken infrastructure.



Ellen performs some much needed maintenance on a trash can.



Ambassadors loaded debris into the truck after a storm so the park would be clear for Movies in the Park.



Two ambassadors shovel the curb cut at Fountain and Division.

Stakeholder Feedback

Andrew M. Travis Thank you for being the "superheroes" of GR!

Like · Reply · 24w

Steven Caio Thank you! Keep GR clean and wonderful

Like · Reply · 24w

Bonnie Nicholas THANK YOU! I've seen you in action - good work!

Like · Reply · 24w

Marsha Beery Steensma Thank you

Like · Reply · 23w · Edited

Peyton Nichele Jefferson This is awesome. Thank you all

Like · Reply · 23w

Mel Trotter Ministries Thank you to every single one of the downtown ambassadors for caring for our neighbors that others pass by. Going as far as walking individuals who are homeless and intoxicated to Mel Trotter Ministries. This city is amazing because of you!

Like · Reply · 23w

Stacy Slikkers Noonan Beaver Xing absolutely loves the Ambassadors!!! We have been street performers for several years, and each one that we meet is equally wonderful. I especially appreciate their demeanor with the 'street people' Kind and caring.

Like · Reply · 23w

Ruby Chaise Thank you for everything you do! You are totally appreciated.

Like · Reply · 23w

Valerie Paroff You are AWESOME! Thanks for all you do for downtown GR!

Like · Reply · 23w

Emily Bryant They do great work keeping our city looking awesome! Thanks to all of you

Like · Reply · 23w

Shelby Fisher I visited this past week for State Games of America and I was blown away, even with all the rain we had a fabulous time! It was beautiful, clean and everyone was so dang nice! The city of Grand Rapids did a fantastic job!

Like · Reply · 24w

Wai-yu Jacobs Thank you for all you do. You are always friendly and with a smile on! You make downtown GR better!

Like · Reply · 24w

Lisa Olson Cooper Keep up the great work! It shows!

Like · Reply · 24w

Tash Malone Rebecca Ritter Krenz love you guys thanks

Like · Reply · 24w

Grace Evelyn Nicest people in town! Thank you for all that you do!

Like · Reply · 24w

Suzanne DiPiazza Katerberg They are on my speed dial- they have helped with my flat tire, an umbrella escort, walking to my car late at night, and help with panhandlers and trouble on the streets.

Like · Reply · 24w

Reva Msmollyrn Smalley Thank you for keeping our city beautiful!!!

Like · Reply · 33w

Rochel George reviewed Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. — 5★
May 13, 2017 · 🌐

I love the ambassadors that come to help out, Marcia and Erin have been so helpful! I've dealt with only one other ambassador but sadly I cannot remember his name, but that you all so much for the work that you do!

Like

Comment

Share

Keith Nickerson reviewed Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. — 5★
October 6, 2017 · 🌐

As an employee of Craft Beer Cellar, located at 404 Ionia SW, I can't thank Talina enough for helping us out tonight. A loud, possibly homeless man wandered into our store, and had begun harassing our guests. When I saw Talina riding by, I waved her over to help. She came right away. Without hesitation, she entered and led the man out of our business! Talina acted swiftly, respectfully, and responsibly, and we at Craft Beer Cellar are grateful for her commitment to performing her job at the highest level.

Like

Comment

Share

Trish Tilden reviewed Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. — 5★
June 20, 2017 · 🌐

We came to GR on June 5th for a walking tour. Our downtown ambassador, Melvin, was both knowledgeable and personable. We had a blast with him!

Like

Comment

Share

Jackie Burns Hickman We are impressed at the number of cigarette butt collection boxes. Why... oh why do people still flick them out their window or on the road/sidewalk. The Ambassadors do a good job of trying to keep them picked up.

Family Promise of Grand Rapids Thanks for all you do in our community Downtown Ambassadors!

Like · Reply · 24w

Adrianne Adelle That's dope! You guys are the best!

Like · Reply · 24w

Matthew Provoast What a great video!! We can't thank you enough for all your hard work and dedication to the Downtown community. With love - Light Gallery + Studio!

Like · Reply · 24w

Katey Morse They do such a good job and are so friendly! 😊

Like · Reply · 3w

Statistics Overview

Total Annual Activity		2017	2016	2015
Equipment Usage	ATLV Hours	186.25	267	NA
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	Sidewalk Violation	8,875	5,002	5,936
	Suspicious Package	18	44	446
	Suspicious Person	302	165	3,465
	Umbrella Escorts	81	76	482
	Total Hospitality & Engagement Activity	291,094	243,087	271,064
Total Ambassador Activity		341,338	303,669	274,037