

We're all in

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DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

OUR ANNUAL
REPORT TO
THE COMMUNITY 2014

Intro

WE'VE WORKED HARD THIS PAST YEAR, ALIGNING AND COMBINING ORGANIZATIONS, OPENING A GREAT NEW OFFICE SPACE, EVOLVING THE WAY WE'RE FULFILLING OUR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY, AND ENGAGING, EMBRACING AND EMPOWERING THE PEOPLE AND PLACES THAT MAKE DOWNTOWN SUCH A VIABLE, VIBRANT PLACE TO BE. IT IS MY PLEASURE TO PRESENT TO YOU THIS ANNUAL REPORT WHICH WILL OUTLINE SOME OF THE GREAT SUCCESSES WE'VE HAD THIS PAST YEAR. BUT IT IS MY EVEN GREATER PLEASURE TO TELL YOU THIS - WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN.

KRISTOPHER LARSON, PRESIDENT + CEO
DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS INC.



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

We're all in

ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE. THAT'S THE BIGGEST REASON DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS HAS QUICKLY BECOME ONE OF THE BIGGEST SUCCESS STORIES OF ANY DOWNTOWN OF ITS SIZE - ANYWHERE IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. BECAUSE EVERYONE INVOLVED IS "ALL IN" AND TOTALLY INTO BUILDING A DOWNTOWN FILLED WITH POSSIBILITIES AND POTENTIAL FOR ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY, PARTY OR PARTICIPATE IN DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS IN ANY POSITIVE WAY.

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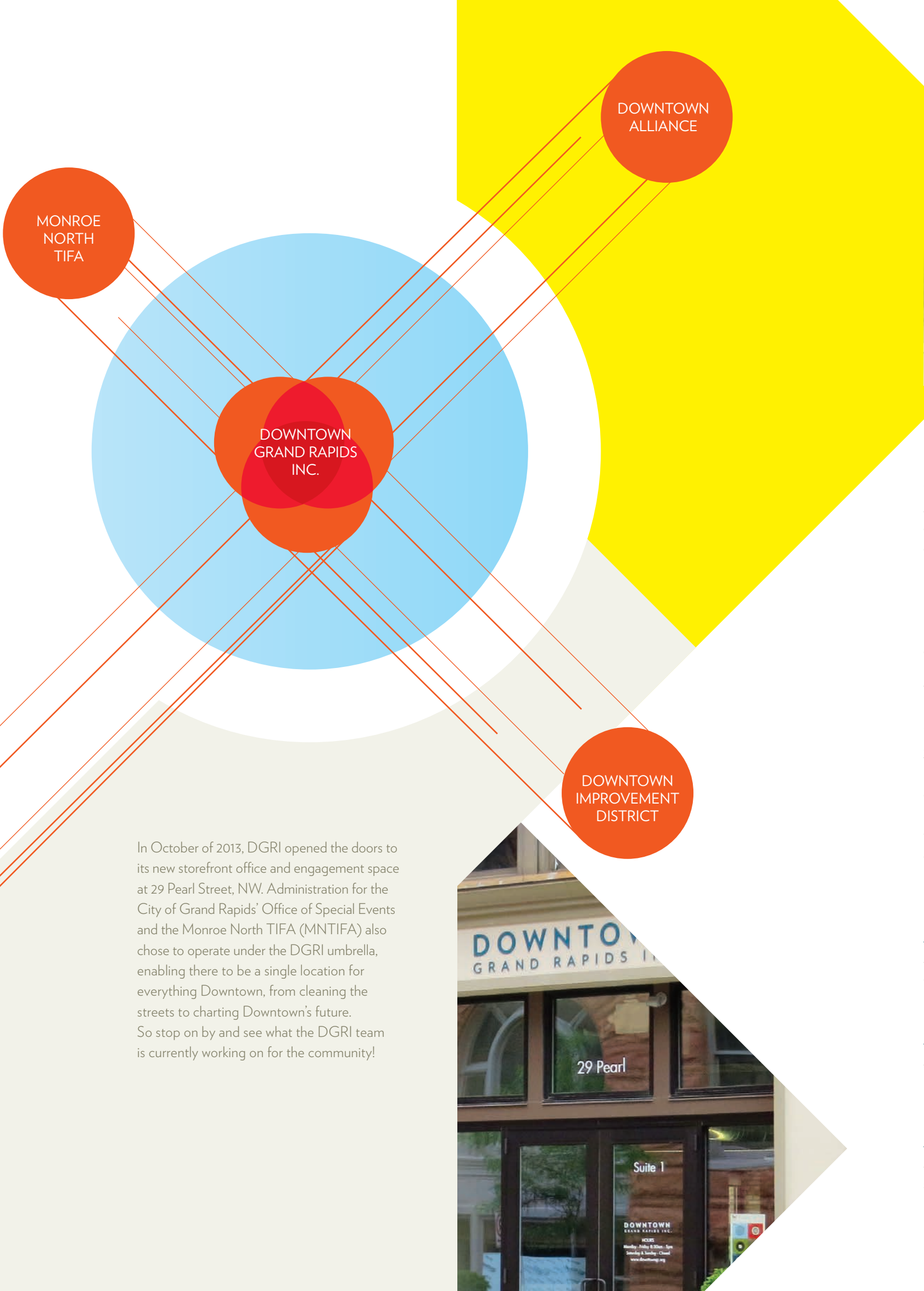
OUR STORY

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) was an idea more than 20 years in the making. Conceived in the early '90s in the *Voices and Visions* strategic plan for Downtown, the concept envisioned a singular entity that would concentrate and simplify the management and development of Downtown.

In 2011, leadership from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the Downtown Improvement District (DID), Downtown Alliance (DA) and the City of Grand Rapids collaborated on an interorganizational planning effort to further explore the concept of a combined entity. That exploration led to the approval of a specific plan for the alignment of several Downtown-centric organizations and consolidation under one administrative entity, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

As a means of accomplishing the goals of alignment and effectiveness, DGRI would also introduce a Board of Advisors that would provide vision and leadership to ensure intentional, strategic collaboration between the partnering entities. Featuring membership who engage top-level leadership from across the region, the DGRI Board of Advisors is poised to enable collective impact among DGRI and its many partners in the community.

By combining the functions of the DDA, DID, DA and MNTIFA, we're able to achieve something bigger than the sum of our parts. Under one name, we're doing two big things – multiplying our impact and serving our greatest common denominator: the citizens of Grand Rapids.



In October of 2013, DGRI opened the doors to its new storefront office and engagement space at 29 Pearl Street, NW. Administration for the City of Grand Rapids' Office of Special Events and the Monroe North TIFA (MNTIFA) also chose to operate under the DGRI umbrella, enabling there to be a single location for everything Downtown, from cleaning the streets to charting Downtown's future. So stop on by and see what the DGRI team is currently working on for the community!



CREATION OF THE ALLIANCES

As a part of the new DGRI organizational model, three Alliances were created to provide meaningful opportunities for Downtown practitioners, employers, partners, cultural institutions, and other stakeholders to be involved in the day-to-day process of improving Downtown Grand Rapids. Each Alliance also includes a representative from the DDA Board, the DID Board, the MNTIFA Board, the City of Grand Rapids, and a Downtown resident. Approximately 65 members of the community are currently engaged with DGRI through the work of the Alliances.

The three Alliances are identified as Investment, Livability, and Vibrancy. Each name encapsulates the focus of the group's respective area of influence in the DGRI model. The Alliances began meeting monthly in November 2013 and provide staff with input regarding DGRI programs, projects, incentives, initiatives, events, and services. Relative to the fiduciary boards of DGRI (DDA, DID, MNTIFA), the Alliances perform deeper, project-level engagement and report back to the DGRI Board of Advisors and the fiduciary boards with regular updates. The members of the Alliances each elected their own chairperson, and by virtue of that election, the chair is provided a voting, ex officio seat on the DGRI Board of Advisors.

ALLIANCE FOR INVESTMENT

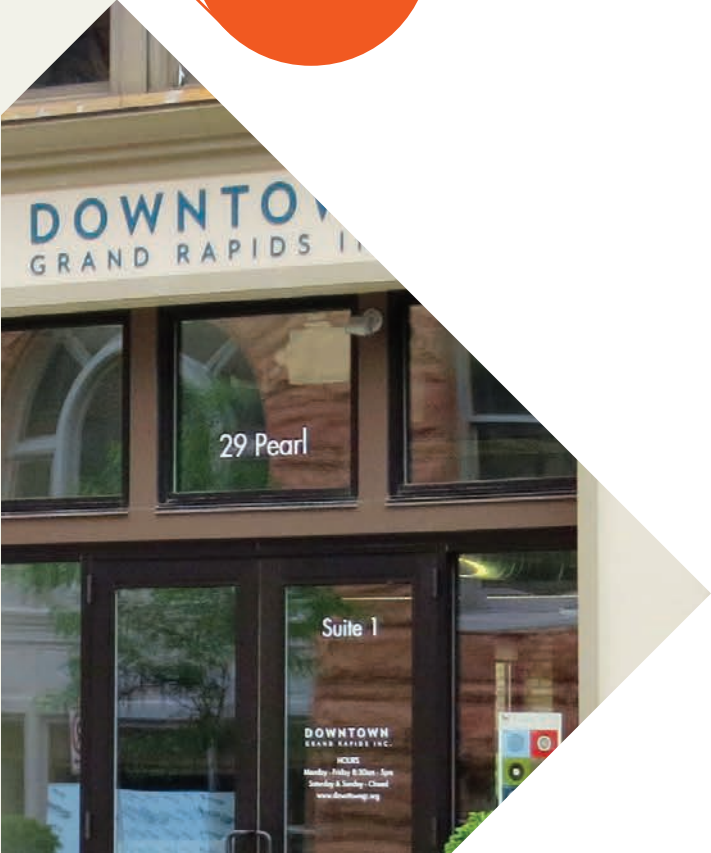
Advises on projects related to Downtown infrastructure, real estate development incentives, urban planning, and economic development. *Chair:* Nikos Monoyios, Long Range Planner, The Rapid

ALLIANCE FOR LIVABILITY

Advises on programs and services related to a clean and safe domain, parks, urban recreation, accessibility, mobility, beautification, and asset management. *Chair:* Lynee Wells, Principal, Williams & Works

ALLIANCE FOR VIBRANCY

Advises on programs related to marketing, promotions, communications, special events, and workforce support initiatives. *Chair:* Dr. David Rosen, Former President, Kendall College of Art and Design



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As a community-based organization, the foundation of DGRI is engaging the community and developing interorganizational partnerships that deliver successful outcomes. The DGRI model is one that involves more than 120 citizens of the greater Grand Rapids community in the organization's fiduciary boards, oversight Alliances, and steering committees.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Just as important, DGRI staff is encouraged to actively participate through volunteer leadership opportunities with organizations dedicated to improving community at the local, state, and national levels. The small team at DGRI give their time to more than a dozen organizations to help advance their respective missions.

NATIONAL

- International Downtown Association – Member and Committee Chair, Board of Directors

STATE

- Michigan Downtown Association – Member, Board of Directors
- Michigan Association of Planning – Member, Government Relations Committee

LOCAL

- Friends of Grand Rapids Parks – Member, Board of Directors
- Dwelling Place – Member, Board of Directors
- Grand Rapids Area Professionals for Excellence – Member, Board of Directors
- Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – Member
- Grand Rapids Streetcar Refinement Study – Advisory Committee Member
- Grand River Restoration – Member, Steering Committee
- Convention and Arena Authority – Community Inclusion Group Member
- Eastown Community Association – Member
- Gilda's Club Grand Rapids – Club Red Member
- Grand Rapids Sister Cities International: Bielsko-Biala Committee Member

In addition to our staff, the DGRI model involves over 120 members of the Grand Rapids community – each one, an individual with their own voice and vision for Downtown.



AWARDS

The act of celebrating successes is critical for maintaining organizational momentum; however, being recognized by professional organizations enables a special opportunity to reflect on a job that was extraordinarily well done. Even in its first year, 2013 was a banner year for DGRI.

In addition to forming as a new organization, DGRI was honored to receive three noteworthy recognitions of excellence – two from the International Downtown Association (IDA) and one from the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP). The award categories included events and programming, urban planning, and public outreach. The IDA's Pinnacle Award is its highest recognition, and projects recognized are considered as setting the standard for best practice in the downtown management industry.

2013 RECOGNITION

IDA PINNACLE AWARD
FOR EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING:
DGRI AND ARTPRIZE

IDA MERIT AWARD
FOR PLANNING:
ARENA SOUTH VISIONING

MAP PLANNING EXCELLENCE AWARD
FOR PUBLIC OUTREACH:
ARENA SOUTH VISIONING



ADVOCACY

Communities invested in their Downtown typically engage in discussions of change and advancement for the area. DGRI is honored to provide an organized voice to advocate for stakeholders' requests for innovation and improvement. Recently, one such opportunity surfaced in the form of parklets.

The term parklets, first coined in San Francisco, describes the conversion of an automobile parking space into an area for human-scaled activity. The creation of a parklet symbolically prioritizes pedestrians in the Downtown and adds visual vibrancy to street life. In the summer of 2013, Downtown Grand Rapids business owners expressed considerable interest in the installation of parklets in front of their storefronts. Tested by organizations such as Build a Better Block Grand Rapids, business and property owners saw parklets as a way to create unique economic development opportunities. In July 2013, DGRI staff advocated for amending the Streetscape Incentive Program to provide financial assistance for the creation of parklets. Following that approved amendment, DGRI and the City of Grand Rapids worked to create practical guidelines around these installations and launched the Grand Rapids Parklet Program in April 2014.

PARTNERSHIPS

Many of DGRI's projects rely on the support of community partners for successful outcomes. Issues of advocacy, options for mobility, and additions in the events calendar require cooperation. One wildly successful, multilevel partnership was the Movies in the Park series, a collaboration between DGRI, Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, the City of Grand Rapids, and the Grand Rapids Police Department. Movies in the Park was produced in an open space with no fencing and a reduced police presence – a unique structure for a special event. While the open approach was certainly nontraditional, the lack of incidents demonstrated attendees' ability to enjoy the event in a neighborly manner.

DGRI also explores new, nontraditional partnerships. During the 2013 – 2014 school year, DGRI served as a partner to the West Michigan Center for Arts + Technology (WMCAT) Community Partners Program. The Program engages 144 high school students from Grand Rapids Public Schools to develop creative solutions to real-world projects using design thinking and project-based learning. DGRI worked with two student groups to develop a photography exhibit and a mobile application game. The projects provided DGRI the opportunity to see Downtown through the eyes of secondary school students, and it offered the students, all of whom are Grand Rapids residents, the opportunity to learn more about their Downtown.

“Partnering with DGRI to create a community staple like Movies in the Park has been one of the highlights of our year.”

STEVE FABER, FRIENDS OF GRAND RAPIDS PARKS



“Our students gained more than real-world experience; they gained a strengthened connection with their Downtown.”

KIM DABBS, WMCAT

EDUCATION + DIALOGUE

In preparation for the Downtown planning process that would begin in the spring of 2014, DGRI staff partnered with a host of local organizations to build a series of free-to-the-public events where citizens could learn from internationally regarded experts operating at the vanguard of the city-building industries. In addition to generating excitement for the upcoming Downtown Plan, there were multiple purposes for the series:

MISSION

- Provide expertise and understanding to enhance and elevate the citizenry's discourse on issues pertinent to Grand Rapids,
- Enhance the visibility of DGRI and its partners, and
- Empower local leadership through information and encouragement to exercise insightful and visionary decision-making.

EVENTS

Each speaker series event included a 45-minute Leadership Luncheon presentation to a group of approximately 20 community leaders and a 75-minute evening public lecture held at Kendall College of Art and Design.

The success of the series would not have been possible without assistance from a group of local partners, which included Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, the City of Grand Rapids, the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition, Grand Rapids Art Museum, The Rapid, Experience Grand Rapids, Kendall College of Art and Design, and The Salon: Urbanist Meetup.

APRIL 11, 2013
GROWTH: HOW WE GO WHEN WE GROW.
 FEATURING JEFFREY TUMLIN, PRINCIPAL,
 NELSON / NYGAARD

AUGUST 1, 2013
VIBRANT URBAN WATERFRONTS.
 FEATURING ALEX KRIEGER, FAIA, PROFESSOR,
 HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

AUGUST 29, 2013
LEADERSHIP IN PLANNING.
 FEATURING MITCHELL SILVER, FAICP, PAST PRESIDENT,
 AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 26, 2013
THE ECONOMICS OF URBANISM.
 FEATURING CHRISTOPHER LEINBERGER,
 BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

BUILDING REUSE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

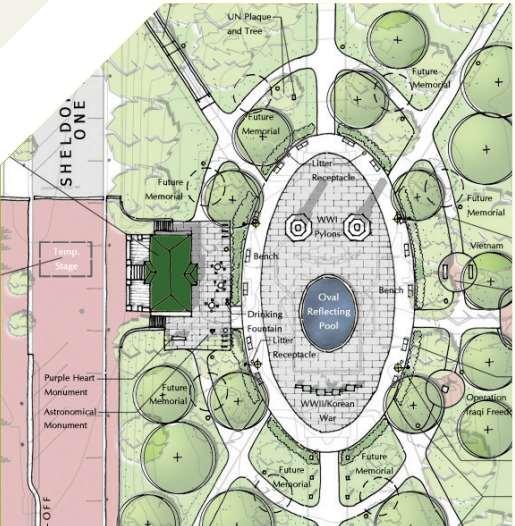
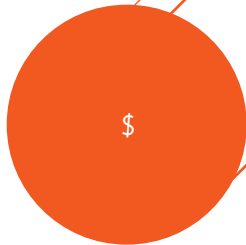
DGRI staff administers the Building Reuse Incentive Program Grant (BRIP) to assist with the rehabilitation of older buildings in the Downtown. The BRIP program is designed to reduce vacancy in older Downtown buildings by providing financial assistance to property owners to overcome the unique challenges of integrating modern building standards within existing structures. Through this program, DGRI is able to encourage the adaptive re-use of existing buildings and preserve authenticity in Downtown. Through the BRIP program, over \$4.5 million of financial assistance has been used to leverage over \$162 million in private investment.

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Another tool to promote economic growth and encourage private investment in the Downtown area is the Development Support Program. Through this program, DGRI assists private development with the construction of new public facilities connected with a development project. Since its inception, the program has invested \$8.7 million to stimulate over \$340 million in private development.

If return on investment is any indicator of our success, then DGRI’s Development Support Program has been one of our most successful programs, stimulating 39 dollars in development for every one dollar invested. It’s like ROI on steroids.

\$1: \$39



PARKS + OPEN SPACE

The density in a Downtown helps to highlight the importance of effective uses of green and open spaces. In 2013, DGRI provided funding for a community-driven planning and design process for capital repairs and improvements at both Veterans and Monument parks. Phase I of this initiative included improvements to Monument Park, which will be completed in June 2014.

PLANNING

As communities realize new populations, businesses, and resources, they undertake continual conversations about accommodating change and remaining competitive. Over the past year, DGRI encouraged the community to look forward in two major planning initiatives: the Arena South Visioning Plan and the Downtown Plan.

The Arena South Visioning Plan created a vision for the eventual development of four vacant properties owned by public entities. DGRI staff used the information gathered during the engagement process to provide the basis for recommendations to improve connectivity, expand walkability, and effect greater economic development.

To further expand on ideas expressed in the Arena South Visioning Plan, DGRI partnered with the City of Grand Rapids to initiate a broader conversation through the launch of a new Downtown Master Plan. The new Downtown Plan, which will be linked with the Grand River Corridor Plan and called “GR Forward,” will help establish goals and prioritize investments to effect and accommodate the changes that will occur over the next decade in Downtown. As both of these plans are implemented, community members will see firsthand the impacts that their contributions make.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Improvements related to roads, utilities, street lighting, and sidewalks help knit together the buildings and people that comprise a city. Over the past year, DGRI has undertaken the following projects and fostered an understanding of the improvements within the context of parallel changes to the Downtown landscape.

IONIA AVE.

The development of the Downtown Market provided a great opportunity to enhance the environment leading to their new facility. DGRI undertook an Ionia Avenue streetscape improvement project to include not only streetscape reconstruction but also an innovative stormwater recapture system. The water from a rain event is collected and used to irrigate the landscaped tree wells found within the streetscape, reiterating the sustainable concepts of the Downtown Market.

JEFFERSON AVE.

In anticipation of The Rapid’s new “Silver Line,” a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, DGRI financially supported reconstruction of Jefferson Avenue SW between Fulton Street and Wealthy Street. The new Jefferson Avenue cross section includes dedicated travel lanes for motorists and bicyclists, new state-of-the-art BRT Stations, and landscaped roundabouts at both the Wealthy Street and Cherry Street intersections.

BLUE BRIDGE

In early 2014, the Downtown community enthusiastically welcomed the next chapter of the iconic Grand Rapids – Indiana Railroad Bridge, known more commonly as the “Blue Bridge”. What began as a necessary maintenance project led to a wider discussion that challenged the community to consider other possibilities for the iconic landmark. While the majority of citizens wanted to keep the bridge blue, the robust community involvement inspired the repainting of the bridge to its signature blue plus the installation of new, color-changing LED lighting to allow the bridge to express its character for 24 hours a day with a range of optional hues for special occasions.

MOBILITY EFFORTS

In the past, DGRI has supported efforts to create a more multimodal and connected city with investments in public transportation infrastructure, connections to public spaces, and programs to support sustainable transportation options. In 2013, DGRI continued those efforts with targeted and innovative investments in mobility improvements.

DGRI INVESTED IN BICYCLE-FRIENDLY ENHANCEMENTS, INCLUDING OVER 150 NEW BICYCLE RACKS, ON-STREET BICYCLE CORRALS, BICYCLE LOCKERS, AND A BICYCLE MAP TO HIGHLIGHT THESE SERVICES.

DGRI PROVIDED FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW AMTRAK STATION, WHICH WILL PROVIDE NEW CONNECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE AREA.

DURING THE BUSIEST TIME OF YEAR FOR DOWNTOWN, ARTPRIZE, DGRI PARTNERED TO SUPPORT A CIRCULATOR ROUTE THAT CONNECTED THOUSANDS OF VISITORS TO VENUES AND ATTRACTIONS DOWNTOWN.

IN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN DGRI, PARKING SERVICES AND THE RAPID, A DASH NORTH ROUTE FINALLY CONNECTS THE MONROE NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD, THE MEDICAL MILE, AND CENTRAL POINTS IN DOWNTOWN.



RESIDENTIAL ENGAGEMENT

As Downtown Grand Rapids continues to grow and diversify, the voices and perspectives of residents are becoming increasingly important to ensure that Downtown is a welcoming, accessible place and urban neighborhood. DGRI was approached in 2013 by an engaged, passionate group of Downtown residents who are working to create a Residents Council to understand and represent the needs of everyone who calls Downtown Grand Rapids home. DGRI currently supports this effort by providing meeting space, data, and various resources to build capacity and ensure the foundation of a sustainable framework to engage, empower, and organize Downtown residents.

DOWNTOWN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

On September 25, 2013, DGRI launched its Downtown Ambassador Program. The local property and business owners asked for proactive services that support the further emergence of Downtown Grand Rapids as a great neighborhood, a fantastic convention and visitor destination, and a vibrant place of commerce. The Downtown Ambassador Program, a trend in other leading cities nationally, was launched in response. The Ambassadors share their knowledge of Downtown Grand Rapids and support safety on the sidewalks and other areas in the public realm. Their ranks include a wide variety of local citizens who share a common affinity for Downtown.

BEAUTIFICATION + ACCESSIBILITY

A great Downtown is a place where people want to explore, linger, interact, and discover. It should be accessible and engaging. DGRI works to create this kind of environment through various programs and investments. From flower planting to heated sidewalks to amenities that create access for individuals with disabilities, DGRI is committed to meaningful, deliberate place-making and place-management initiatives that enhance Downtown Grand Rapids for everyone.

The Downtown Clean Team is integral to providing that welcoming environment. Among their responsibilities, they are charged with keeping the public realm free of litter and debris. Perhaps most important, especially on the heels of one of the worst winters on record, the Clean Team assists in snow and ice removal to help keep sidewalks and street crossings safe for pedestrians.

“We look forward to continuing our work with DGRI to make Downtown Grand Rapids universally accessible.”

DAVE BULKOWSKI, DISABILITY ADVOCATES OF KENT COUNTY



“Ambassadors have given me an escort when it rains and have a sunny, cheerful disposition – always.”

JIM SHAFER,
DOWNTOWN WORKER

DGRI-PRODUCED EVENTS

DGRI continually strives to connect with the community, often through the use of events containing elements of entertainment, education, and engagement. DGRI seeks input in conceptualizing events and uses those events to serve the changing preferences of urban dwellers, workers and visitors. With a range of yearlong programming, from Valent-ICE, a live ice carving event, to Movies in the Park, the wildly successful summertime staple, DGRI involves the community in deciding how they want to have fun in Downtown.

DGRI’s most recognizable event comes in the form of a fairly simple concept, Movies in the Park. In 2013, DGRI received substantial interest from the general public to advance this concept with the idea that the community could come together and enjoy public spaces with some level of responsibility given to the attendees. This interest led to an investment by DGRI in a three-story movie screen and all the necessary equipment to show free, outdoor movies for the public. The inaugural series, held at Ah-Nab-Awen Park, welcomed thousands to bring a blanket, a chair, food, beer and wine for a free movie in the park.

“Not only is DGRI working to support the community, they make it fun to be involved.”

ADRIAN “A.B.” BUTLER,
LOCAL PERFORMER



SPONSORED EVENTS

Not only does DGRI organize its own events, but it also provides financial assistance to events produced by other organizations which energize downtown merchants, provide cultural enhancement, and brand Downtown Grand Rapids as a place of vitality, community, culture, and entertainment. The desired outcome is a comprehensive offering of diverse, high-quality events that provide compelling reasons to visit Downtown.

The DGRI grant programs assist events and promotions that first meet a rigorous level of criteria. Through the event support programs, DGRI showcases its commitment to investing funds in support of Downtown events and programs. Over the last year, DGRI provided financial support to over 15 events in the Downtown.

- ARTPRIZE
- AVE. FOR THE ARTS: FIRST FRIDAYS
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RECEPTION
- DOWNTOWN FIESTA
- GRANDJAZZFEST
- GR FILM FEST
- GREAT SKATE WINTERFEST
- HOCKEY NIGHT WEDNESDAYS
- ICE-SKATING AT ROSA PARKS CIRCLE
- LAUGHFEST
- MSU GRAN FONDO
- MEIJER STATE GAMES DOWNHILL SKATEBOARD
- RESTAURANT WEEK
- SICILIANO’S BIG BREW DAY
- SIMPLY LIVING
- SWING DANCING

“Movies in the Park has been an awesome community event. I love the experience. Thank you!”

JILL MAY,
DOWNTOWN WORKER



DOWNTOWN EVENTS

With the wealth of events occurring Downtown, there truly are unique offerings for the community to enjoy the urban landscape. From skateboard races to ice cream challenges to cultural festivals, Downtown Grand Rapids provides a center of activity for the region. The City of Grand Rapids Office of Special Events, housed in the DGRI office space, keeps records of all of the events occurring in public spaces each year. These events occur in our parks and on our streets throughout the entire Downtown. Over the past year, there were over 100 events that occurred in the Downtown. To name a few, there have been over a dozen races, almost 10 culturally focused events, and six music-related festivals.

Over the past year there were more than 100 events that occurred in Downtown Grand Rapids.

CITY LIGHTS MUSIC FESTIVAL CLASSIC ROCK 5K ADA CELEBRATION NHA UNIVERSITY LUNCH CRUZ-
CALDER DENALI MOOSE TRACKS SCOOP CHALLENGE GRGM BIRTHDAY STREET PARTY THE
RUN POLISH FESTIVAL IT'S GLOW TIME DGRI MOVIES IN THE PARK MARINE CO
ISING PEACE DAY ON MONROE WEST MICHIGAN SUMMER CLASSIC RUNNING JULLS
GRAND AND JAZZ FEST GRAND NIGHT IN WHITE GREEN GALA WAITER/WAI
RACE
HISPANIC CELEBRATION ON THE GRAND MEXICAN FESTIVAL ARTPRIZE MAYOR'S LABOR
DAY LAB
WALK TO DEFEAT ALS MAYOR'S GRAND CLEAN UP AIDS WALK/RUN COTTAGE BAR
CHILI COOK-OFF JDRF WALK TO CURE DIABETES GVSU MARCHING BAND KICK-OFF BRIDGE RUN
RITZ KONEY CORNSACKER TOURNAMENT KID'S ARTEEST LIVE UNITED 5K WALK FOR FARM ANIMALS
URBAN ADVENTURE RACE ARTPRIZE LIGHT THE NIGHT STEP OUT WALK TO STOP DIABETES LOLE
YELLOW YOGA HEARTSIDE FUN HEARTWALK AUTOIMMUNE AWARENESS WALK SPECTRUM
HEALTH BETTY FORD BANNER O
RAS ACROSS THE GRAND RUN THRU THE RAPIDS GR MAR-
ATHON HALLOWEEN ON IONIA Z
DASH SANTA PARADE GR 1K 11.11.11 CEREMONY VETERAN'S
DAY PARADE THE WOOLLY SWEATER RUN GRAM TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY HOT NEW YEAR'S EVE
PARTY GREAT STATE EV
ON ICE GILDAS LALC
GAZELLE GIRLS HALE
BREW DAY FRIENDSHIP CHALLENGE GRAND RAPIDS ORIGINAL SWING SOCIETY DANCE CAT FOOT-
WEAR GRAND RAPIDS POLICE MEMORIAL DOWNTOWN FIESTA GREAT STRIDES WALK STOMP OUT
STIGMA EENHORN INC. VOLUNTEER EVENT MEMORIAL DAY PARADE & CEREMONY BLUE BRIDGE BI
CYCLE DRAG RACE NANA'S RUN 5K RACE FESTIVAL C
THE ARTS WE
WEST MICHIGAN PRIDE FESTIVAL
LOCAL FIRST STREET PARTY FOUNDER'S FEST GRA
DO DGRI MOVIE NIGHTS BLUES ON THE
WALK LINE DANCING AT RPC RELAY FOR LIFE, LIFE
RAWBERRY FEST MEIJER STATE GAMES
URBAN DOWNHILL SKATEBOARD EVENT GRACE IN THE CITY NEW BELGIUM CLIPS OF FILM AND BEER
TOUR THE RX RUN WALK TO CURE LUPUS FREEDOM CRUISE SREBRENICA GENOCIDE MEMORIAL

10
CULTURAL
FESTIVALS

15
RUNS
+ WALKS

7
SPORTS
+ AUTO

1
ARTPRIZE

21
FUNDRAISERS

PHOTO COURTESY OF KCAD >



10
HOLIDAY
CELEBRATIONS

6
MUSIC
FESTIVALS



THE HOLIDAYS

Through discussions with community members and Downtown stakeholders, DGRI staff sought to adorn Downtown with holiday décor, promotions, and events that would create a festive atmosphere that both reflected on nostalgic memories and captured the unique qualities of Grand Rapids today. DGRI worked with a local vendor to hang over 84,000 lights throughout the Downtown. Many of those lights surrounded an ongoing DGRI investment in ice skating at Rosa Parks Circle which served over 35,000 skaters during the 2013-14 season. The kickoff of the lighting began in conjunction with DGRI's inaugural Window Wonderland Competition, a collaborative effort with Kendall College of Art and Design. 58 students from KCAD and GVSU worked with 21 Downtown businesses to create memorable holiday storefront displays for visitors and dwellers to enjoy. As people went from store to store over the holidays, DGRI showed its appreciation with the Gift of Downtown promotion where shoppers were rewarded for enjoying Downtown over the holidays with a prize package including a night's stay at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel.

“We’re really looking forward to being a part of the neighborhood this holiday season.”

NICK YRIBAR AND CURTIS SULLIVAN, VAULT OF MIDNIGHT COMIC BOOK SHOP



< PHOTO COURTESY OF KCAD



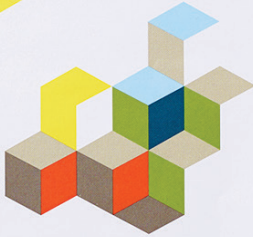
MARKETING + PR

DGRI looks for opportunities to share the message of Downtown Grand Rapids' activities and accomplishments with the region, the nation, and the world. That includes purchasing advertising as well as generating attention through public relations. In the past fiscal year, DGRI advertisements were present on social media, in magazines, over the radio, and on billboards. These ads promoted the new formation of DGRI as well as specific events held Downtown. In the media, DGRI also proudly sponsored The Rapi-dian's Place Matters page, a weekly curated page dedicated to discussions of place-making in the area. The DGRI-produced content consistently gained more interactions than the average piece.

Kantorwassink, located right here in Downtown Grand Rapids, helped us create the DGRI brand and, in the process, helped us win the prestigious National Communicator Award for Marketing Excellence.



Are you a die-hard runner, thinking about opening a small business, particularly fond of avant-garde jazz, a lover of Italian food who prefers IPA to stout, thinks Ron Burgundy is brilliant and wondering where you can ice skate under the stars until midnight? We can answer that.



DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS INC.

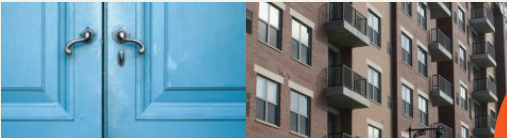
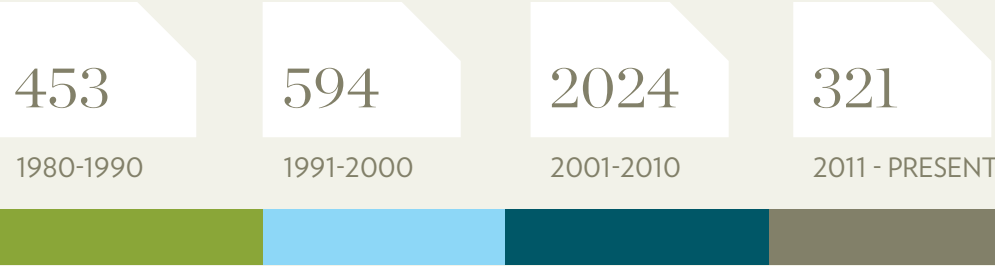
Introducing the all new, who's who, in the know, all you need to know, one stop resource about Downtown. Whether you are moving, buying, shopping, visiting, dining, carousing, or establishing - we're who you need to know - to know all you need to know about Downtown Grand Rapids. Why not visit us, follow us, like us, or just stop on by.

29 PEARL STREET NW DOWNTOWNGR.ORG FACEBOOK • TWITTER

RESIDENTIAL MIX

Since 2000, approximately 2,350 housing units have been built Downtown, which represents a 200% increase over the past 20 years. An additional 700 units are planned to be built over the next two years, and recent housing analysis has indicated demand is many multiples of that. One thing is clear: As Downtown Grand Rapids grows and provides the cultural vibrancy and amenities that people crave, it will continue to be one of the most desirable neighborhoods in West Michigan.

TOTAL DOWNTOWN HOUSING UNITS BUILT BY DECADE

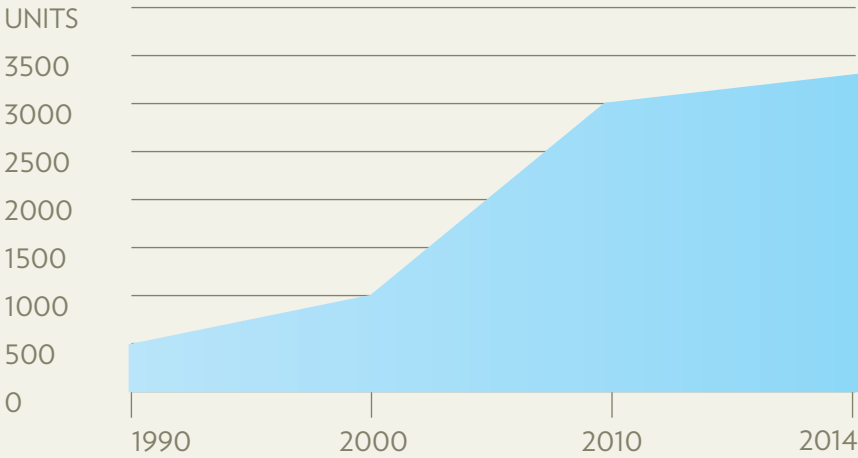


3392
TOTAL
UNITS

FOR SALE VS RENTAL

40%
FOR SALE
1340 UNITS

60%
FOR RENT
2052 UNITS



RETAIL INVENTORY

The Downtown merchants are known throughout the community for their unique offerings and passion for their products. Downtown Grand Rapids was happy to welcome 27 new merchants this year. These additions serve a range of interests, including a new comic book shop, a T-shirt printing press, a bridal shop, and a specialty doughnut shop. The increased community desire for authenticity and local economic retention is driving the growing composition of our Downtown retail and restaurant industries.

246
TOTAL
MERCHANTS

MERCHANTS
BY CATEGORY



82.6%
OFFICE SPACE
OCCUPANCY



OFFICE SPACE OCCUPANCY

It's easy to simply look up and admire the tall buildings and beautiful architecture within a city, but it is essential to understand all the unique people and professions these structures hold. A large percentage of the Downtown population on any given day is here for their jobs and businesses. Many view Downtown Grand Rapids as the economic hub of the region. Over the past year, all levels of office space occupancy have increased in both the Central Business District and Greater Downtown area.

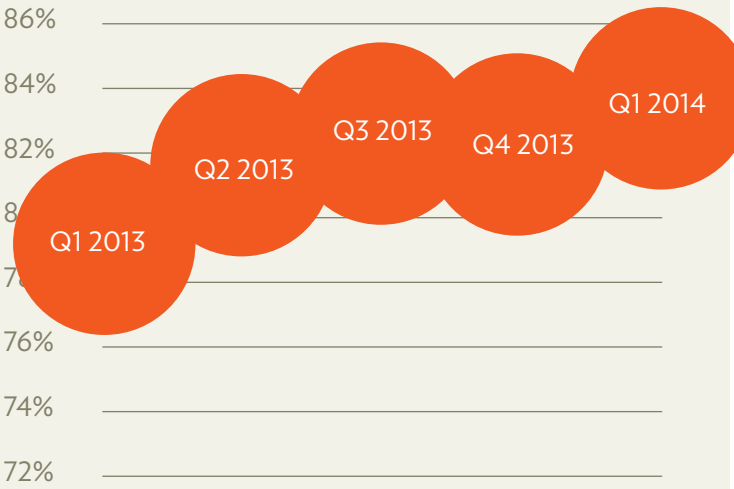
CENTRAL
BUSINESS DISTRICT
INVENTORY (% LEASED)



TOTAL
CLASS A
CLASS B
CLASS C



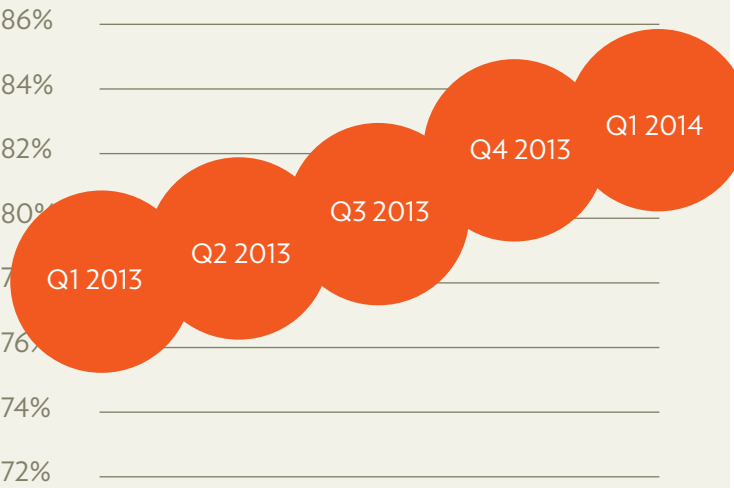
CENTRAL
BUSINESS DISTRICT
OCCUPANCY



GREATER
DOWNTOWN AREA
INVENTORY (% LEASED)



GREATER
DOWNTOWN AREA
OCCUPANCY



Team DGRI

WITH DGRI'S FOCUS ON COLLECTIVE IMPACT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE MULTIPLE VOICES INVOLVED AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. THE MANY LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY HAVE SET THE STAGE TO GROW LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY WHILE EMPOWERING CURRENT LEADERS WITH THE CONFIDENCE THAT THEY ARE STEERING DOWNTOWN'S FUTURE ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS AND DESIRES.

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