



THE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT:

A Tool to Continue Improving Downtown Grand Rapids

What is the Downtown Improvement District?

The Downtown Improvement District (DID) is an important tool supporting the ongoing revitalization of Downtown Grand Rapids. Through the DID our Downtown community receives critical place-management services such as the daily cleaning of our sidewalks, flower planting and beautification, restaurant and retail-oriented marketing and promotions, snowmelt, snow removal from intersections, and advocacy efforts.

By state law, DID revenue should be used to enhance, not replace, the level of service that local government provides. Through the DID, all business and property owners accept a role in helping to achieve the goal of a Downtown Grand Rapids that is vibrant, clean, and beautiful.

The DID transforms contributions collected from special assessments on real property in Downtown Grand Rapids into the enhanced services and benefits that you see and experience every day. The Clean Team, snow melt operations, seasonal flower planting, marketing, advocacy, and special events become direct returns for your investment in Downtown.



DID Overview

Who manages the DID?

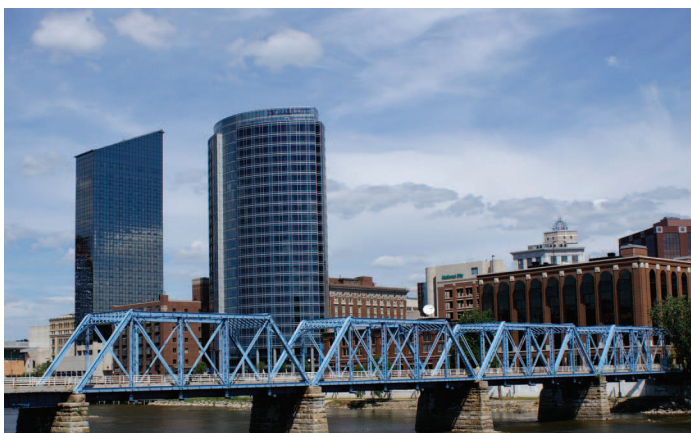
The DID is guided by the judgement and insight of an City Commission-appointed governing Board and various Alliances comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders – all whom volunteer their time and expertise to ensure that contributions are managed in an ethical, efficient, and effective fashion. Collectively, the DID Board and the Alliances include more than 80 property and business owners, civic leaders, and Downtown residents.

Who administers the DID Services?

Established in 2000, the services are administered by Downtown Grand Rapids Inc (DGRI). The offices of DGRI are located at 29 Pearl St, NW, in the heart of Downtown Grand Rapids.

What is happening to the DID?

The DID is in the final year of the current 3-year authorization period, and a Steering Committee comprised of 7 Downtown property owners is leading a renewal effort to ensure that Downtown does not lose services such as the daily cleaning of the sidewalks, landscaping and beautification, marketing, and advocacy on behalf of the Downtown community.



DID Renewal Steering Committee:

Sarah Abel
Rockford Construction

Michael Bishop
*PNC Bank and
DID Board Member*

Eric DeLong
City of Grand Rapids

Walt Gutowski
1st Ward City Commissioner

Bob Herr
DID Board Chair

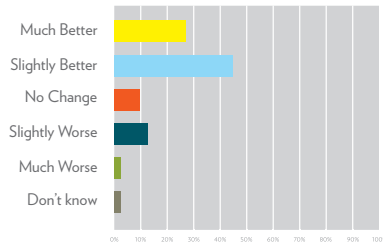
Julie Maue
Franklin Partners

Monica Steimle
616 Development

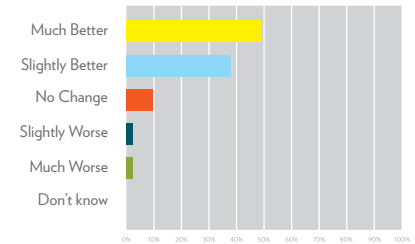
Key Insights from 2015 Stakeholder Survey

In early 2015, the DID Steering Committee commissioned a survey of DID contributors to gain insights on the existing services conferred, and for determining the needs for new / improved services and expanding the service area. 50 business and property owners responded to the survey. Below is a sample of survey results:

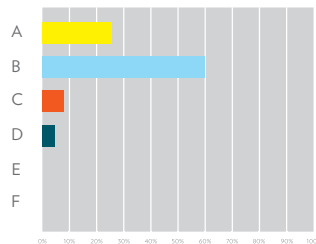
Do you think the perception of safety in Downtown Grand Rapids has become better or worse in the last 5 years?



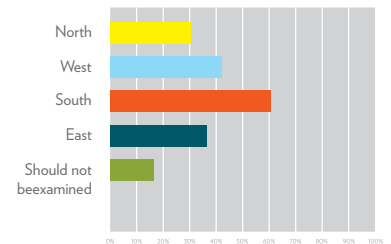
Do you think the cleanliness of Downtown Grand Rapids has become better or worse in the last 5 years?



Overall, how would you grade the efforts of the Downtown Improvement District? (Please select one)



In your opinion, are any of the areas listed below logical expansion for the next Downtown Improvement District? (Check all that apply)



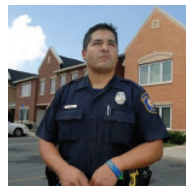
EXISTING

Key DID Service Priorities

NEW

Clean Team

Maintain daily sidewalk trash removal, seasonal power washing of all sidewalks, snow removal from parking meters and at intersections.



Expanded Public Safety

Contract for special uniformed, pedestrian police deployment in high traffic areas on Th – Sat nights.

Beautification

Seasonal planting in dozens of flower boxes around Downtown.

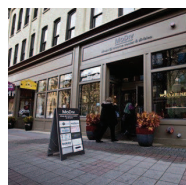
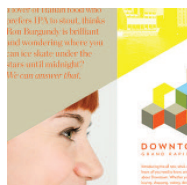


Expanded Downtown Ambassador Program

DID contributions to the popular Downtown Ambassador Program would make possible a 25% increase in program deployment, which would increase service to seven days per week.

Marketing

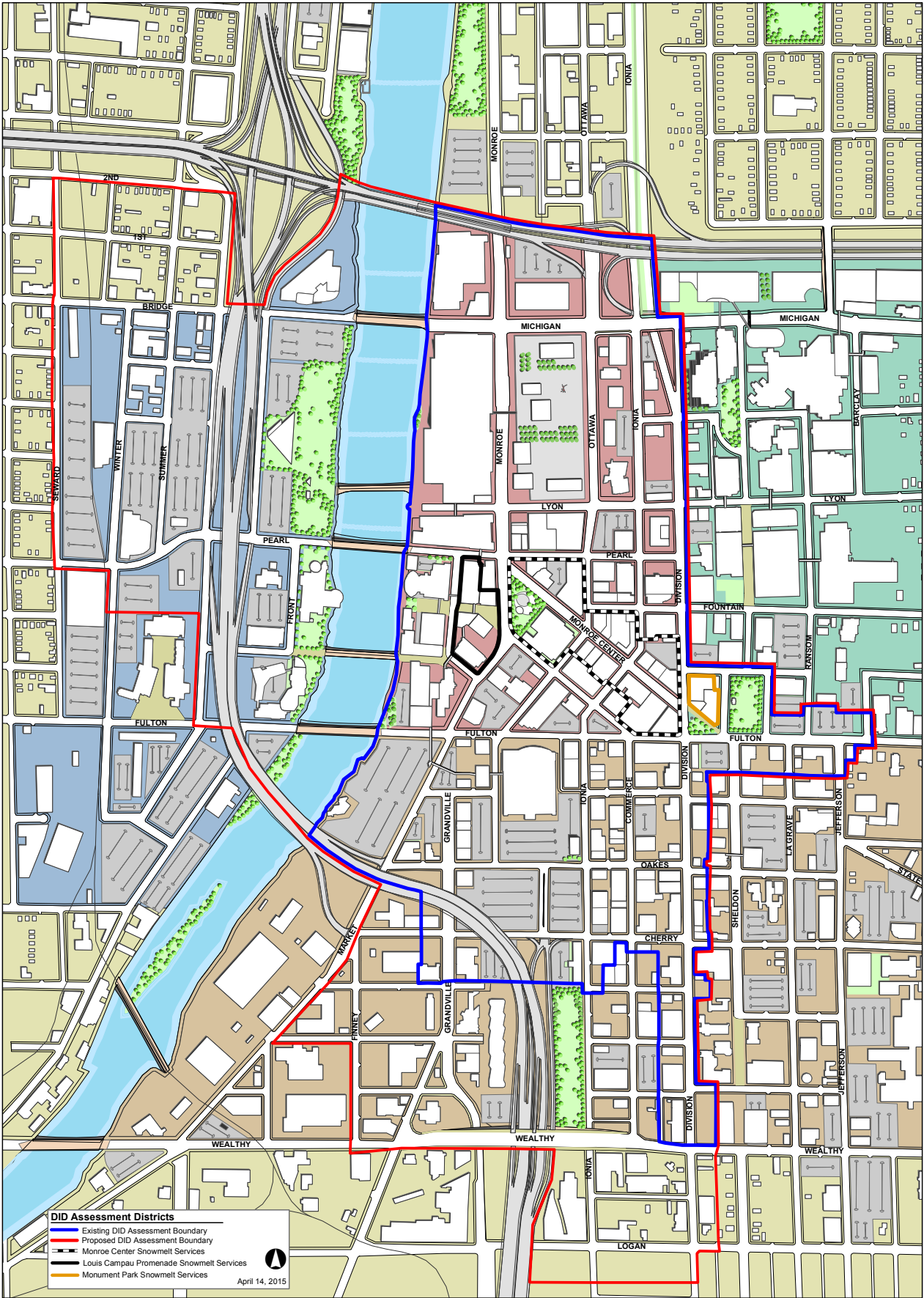
Conduct marketing and promotions efforts to drive vibrancy in Downtown.



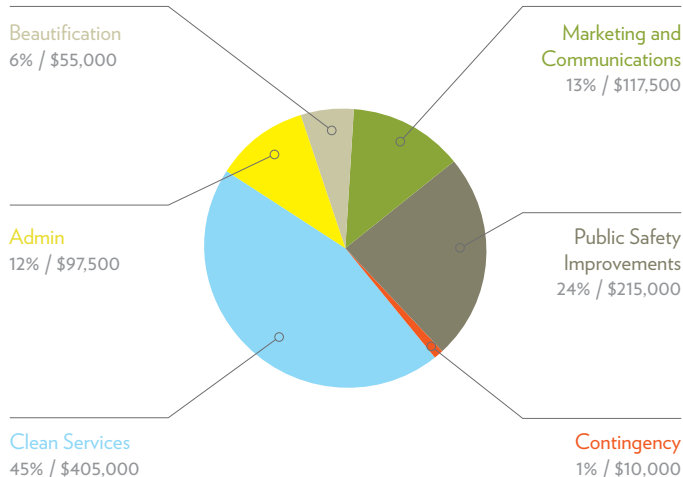
Economic Development

Storefront activation efforts in challenged retail areas, plus programs designed to assist small business development in Downtown.

Existing and Proposed DID Boundaries



Proposed Annual Areawide Expense Allocations



"The services provided by the DID are a critical part of managing the Downtown neighborhood, and therefore are good for our business. The residents in our buildings value living in a clean and beautiful neighborhood."

Monica Steimle, 616 Development



"We are excited that our investments in Downtown Grand Rapids will be maintained, and are looking forward to inclusion in the DID."

John Green, Founders Brewing

Upcoming DID Renewal Process & Milestones:

April 21

DID Board considers new 5-year necessity and FY16 Budget to City Commission.

May 12

City Commission considers adoption of resolution setting date, time and place for public hearing of necessity for special assessment.

May 15 – May 29

DID Board report available for public inspection.

June 9

City Commission Public Hearing concerning necessity of special assessment.

June 16

City Commission considers adoption of resolution establishing necessity for services or project to be financed by special assessment.

June 22-July 10

Special assessment roll open for public inspection in City Assessor's Office.

Aug 11

Board of Review hearing (City Commission sitting as Bd of Review)

Aug 18

City Commission considers adopting resolution confirming special assessment roll.

Aug 31

Billing of special assessment roll, if approved.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: How long is the proposed DID authorization period?

State law permits a period of up to 10 years, and property owners in Grand Rapids are recommending a five-year authorization.

Q: How are contributions from property owners collected?

Contributions are normally collected via a special assessment added onto your summer tax bill from the City of Grand Rapids.

Q: How are assessments calculated?

Assessments are based upon an assessment benefit study prepared by S. B. Friedman & Co. of Chicago. This methodology permits a proportionate sharing of costs within the district. Property features to be assessed include: property area, property street frontage, building area, and parking area.

Q: On what day are assessments calculated?

Assessments are calculated for properties as they exist on tax day of the year they are to be assessed (i.e. December 31 of the previous year).

Q: Are all properties within the boundary assessed?

All properties within the district are assessed, even if they are ordinarily exempt from property taxes. Michigan law provides an exemption only for certain residential properties and government properties. However, some non-profit owned buildings are assessed at a lower rate.

Q: Do all properties within the boundary pay for snowmelt operations?

No, only those properties adjacent to the Monroe Center, Louis Campau, and Monument Park snowmelt systems contribute to the maintenance and operational costs.

Q: Whom ultimately approves the reauthorization of the DID?

While the DID Board makes a formal recommendation for approval, the City Commission has the official authority to authorize the establishment of the district.