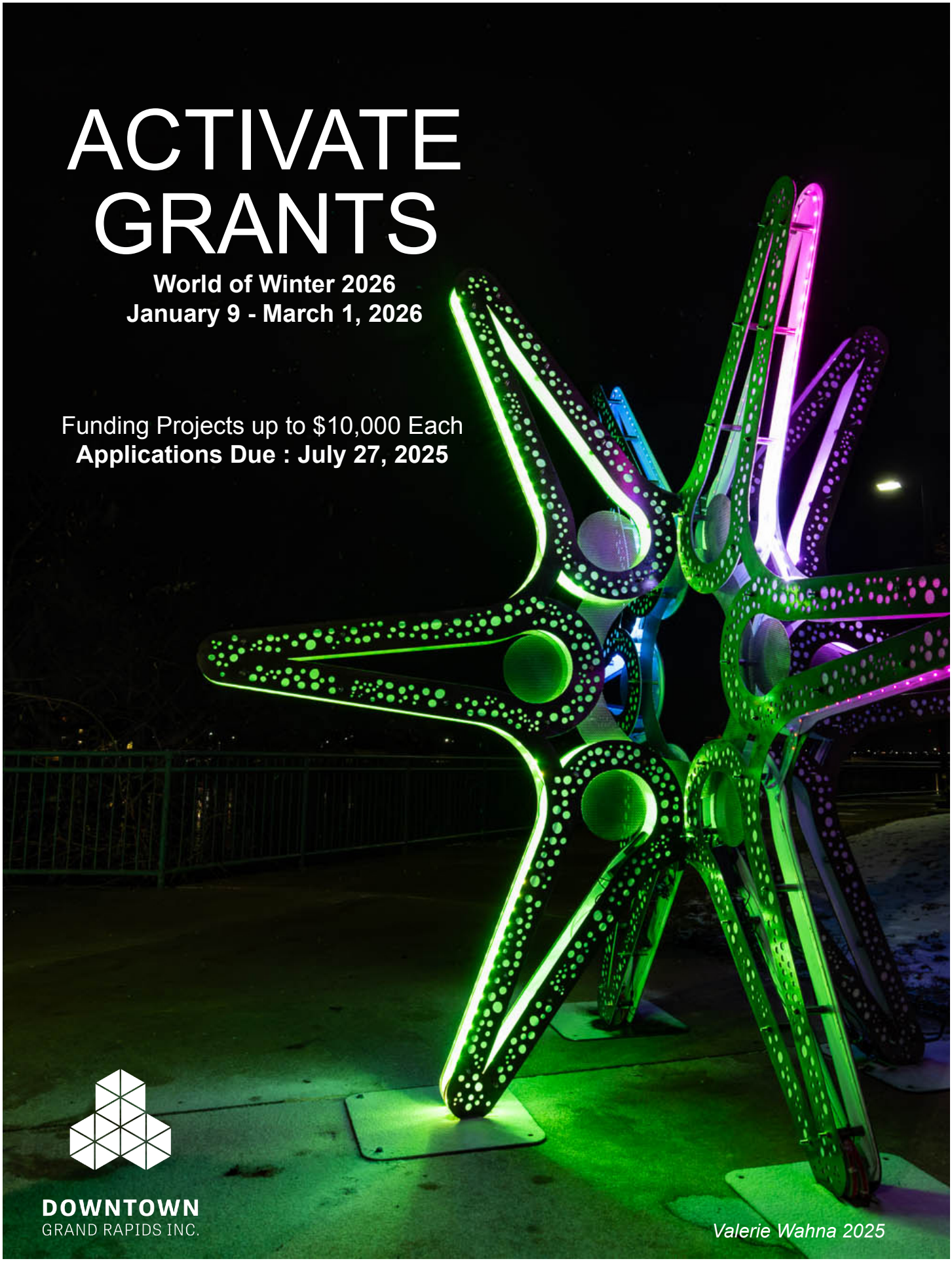
ACTIVATE GRANTS

World of Winter 2026
January 9 - March 1, 2026

Funding Projects up to $10,000 Each
Applications Due : July 27, 2025



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Valerie Wahna 2025

About Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) is the organization responsible for city building and place-management in the urban core of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

DGRI actively engages more than 100 unique individuals from metro Grand Rapids in the decision-making flow of the organization's fiduciary boards, advisory alliance and project steering committees. This robust leadership network ensures DGRI continually brings together people with different knowledge, perspective and experience to solve problems, identify opportunities and directly support the day-to-day work of improving Grand Rapids' Downtown neighborhoods.

For more information please visit - downtowngr.org

About World of Winter 2026

The World of Winter Festival is a two-month celebration designed to transform Grand Rapids into a vibrant, four season city by activating public spaces with art, activities and events—all completely free to the public.

In 2025, the festival hosted 130+ events and installations over seven weeks, attracting over 5 million visitors, making it the largest and longest-running winter festival in North America.

Activate Grant recipients are automatically part of the World of Winter Festival. They will be featured on the website and promoted as part of the festival.

For more information please visit - worldofwintergr.com.



Trebellas, Betka-Pope 2025



Two Eagles Marcus 2025

Activate Grants

Funding Projects up to $10,000 each
Applications Due : July 27, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. EST

DGRI offers grant support for activating public spaces to culturally enhance our community. The purpose of this grant is to provide artists, event organizers and placemakers the opportunity to help create a unique experience for downtown visitors and share their creativity with the community by helping us activate the public realm.

DGRI is seeking proposals for activations (artworks, events, sculptures, etc.) that will be hosted in Downtown Grand Rapids between January 9 and March 1, 2026 for our annual World of Winter festival.

Any space Downtown can be a source of inspiration and a place for activation with permission from the property owner(s). It is the responsibility of the grant applicant to find a feasible location for their proposal. DGRI staff is available to support location identification. Proposals that incorporate interactive elements and engagement are encouraged. All proposals must be able to withstand wintry weather including cold, rain, sleet, hail, snow, wind and ice.

Proposed activations must be suitable for all audiences, accessible for all abilities and open to the public free of cost. Any proposed activations on publicly-owned property requires approval by the City of Grand Rapids Arts Advisory Council.

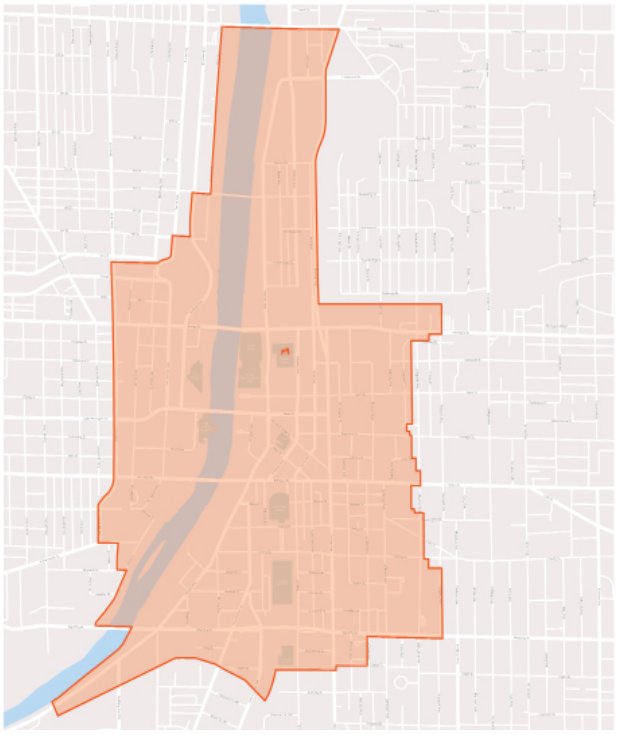
Types of Site Activation

This application is open to any medium or form of activation. This could include, but is not limited to, site specific installation, sculpture, alley activations, events, performance, projection, murals and multimedia.

Location

The applicant may propose a specific location within DGRI's boundary or multiple locations that might be suitable for the proposed work. There are some suggested locations at the end of this document to help inspire and provide some ideas.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to gain approval from the owner of the location. If the location is on public property, DGRI will assist the applicant with the process, but it is ultimately the applicant's responsibility.



ALL PROPOSALS FOR GRANT IMPLEMENTATIONS MUST BE HELD WITHIN THE DGRI BOUNDARIES.

Insurance

Artists are encouraged to explore purchasing insurance for artworks, but it is not required. If your project involves an event you may also be required to carry specific insurance.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be at least 18 years old
- Applicants must be in good standing with Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.
- All activations must be free and open to the public

Budget

Artists may request funding for up to $10,000.

The funding may be used for anything relating to the project such as materials, travel, engineering, machinery, insurance, artist stipend etc. Selected applicants will be paid 50% upon gaining necissary approvals/ permits, and 50% upon completion of the project.

When budgeting, applicants should consider including safety materials as well, such as cord covers and anything else needed to maintain a safe environment around the work.

Contracts

DGRI will send a standard Activate Grant contract to grantees for review. Upon signing, the grantee may invoice for the first payment.

Selection Process

A selection committee comprised of community memebers and stakeholders will review each application and provide recommendations for funding.

Applications will be evaluated based on the submitted application materials, how well a proposed project activates its space, community engagement and merit. Following selection committee recommendation, DGRI will contact selected applicants. Funding is limited and highly competitive. Proposals for grant funding that are political, sexual or religious in any way will not be considered.

Schedule

June 2025 : Applications open
June 25, 2025 : Activate Grant Virtual Q&A at 12:00PM EST (more information here).
July 21, 2025 : Deadline for applicant questions submitted to kmoore@downtowngr.org by 11:59PM EST
July 27, 2025 : Applications deadline by 11:59PM EST
September 12, 2025 : Applicants notified
September - October 2025 : Installation plans & schedule finalized, permits obtained from the City of Grand Rapids as needed.
October 20, 2025 at 3:00 PM EST : Arts Advisory Committee Meeting (as needed).
January 9 - March 1, 2026: World of Winter 2026
March 2026: Installations completed and removed

DGRI may revise the schedule at any time in the process. Changes will be communicated to applicants.

Opportunity to Learn More

DGRI will be offering an opportunity for interested applicants to learn more about Activation Grants and World of Winter. Details on how to participate in this virtual session can be found here.

Activate Grant Virtual Q&A
When : June 25, 2025 12:00PM – 1:00PM
DGRI's Activation Manager, Katie Moore, will walk through the application materials and answer audience questions about the grant.

Details on how to participate in this virtual session can be found here.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to DGRI's Activation Manager, Katie Moore, with any questions about their proposed project or location. Please email : kmoore@downtowngr.org

Considerations

- Projects that are interactive will be given greater consideration. Please consider how the public will be able to interactive with the proposed artwork.
- If your proposal is part of another event, please consider elaborating how this grant will benefit the community outside the dates of the event.
- Every project on city owned property must be approved by the City of Grand Rapid's Arts Advisory Committee. DGRI will work with you to prepare materials for this.
- All proposed projects should be accessible.
- All proposed projects should not require security.
- Projects should promote and amplify a diverse and inclusive representation of the many cultural and ethnic backgrounds of our City.
- In exchange for, and as consideration for, any discretionary Grant money awarded to an applicant, DGRI may use and display images of the Installation/Event for DGRI-related purposes, including advertising, educational and promotional materials and multimedia publicity in support of promotion of DGRI projects and initiatives.
- DGRI is a 501c(3) organization and does not sell or profit from any imagery, photography or videography of any proposed activation.



Mandy Cano Villalobos 2023

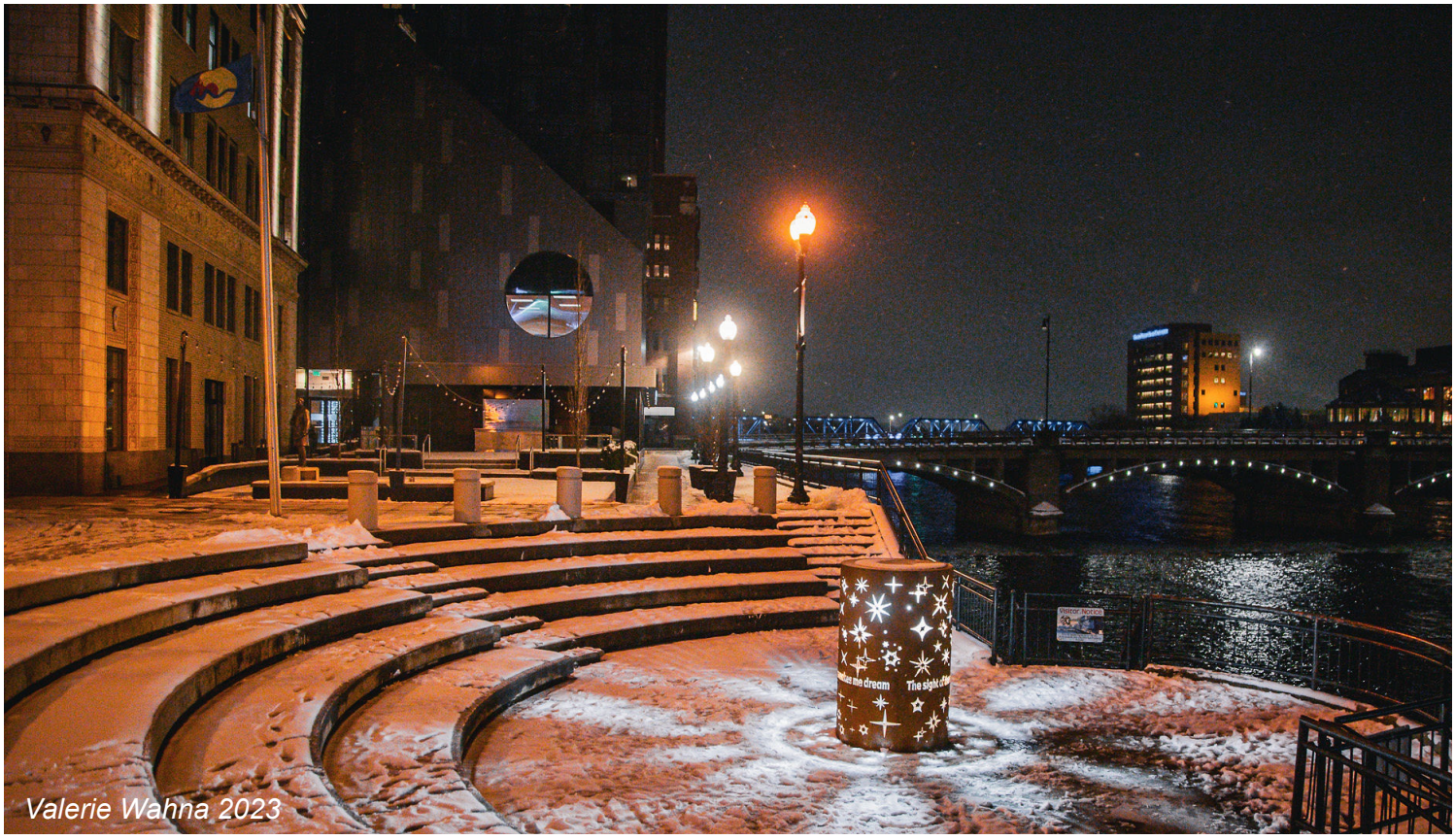
How to Submit a Proposal

Please submit the following information by **July 27, 2025**. File names should include artists' first and last name.
Dropbox link can be found here.

- Please complete this short questionaire. (Does not need to be emailed or added to Dropbox)
- Resume or CV that includes relative experience.
- Artist website or social media that represents similar projects. If you don't have either please provide at least (5) images or videos of relatable previous projects.
- Proposed location(s) for project. You can find a list of locations at the end of this document or propose a new location.
- Detailed physical and conceptual description of proposed artwork. This should also include a description of materials being used, any programming involved, maintenance plan and any other information you feel would be helpful for the review committee. If your installation has interactive components please explain.
- Renderings and/or images of proposed project. Please do not submit AI renderings.
- Site-map of proposed installation/project.
- Estimated budget including a breakdown of costs. Keep in mind DGRI pays 1/2 up front and 1/2 after the project is complete.
- Although using AI as a tool is permitted, it is preferable that most of the application is composed by the applicant.

Questions?

- If you have any questions concerning your application, ideas, potential locations, etc., please reach out to Katie Moore : kmoore@downtowngr.org.

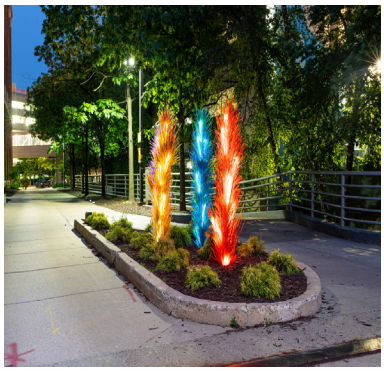

Valerie Wahna 2023

Activate Grant
Potential Locations 2026

With permission from the property owner, any location in the DGRI boundary can be a potential location for an activation. These are suggestions, but we encourage you to spend some time Downtown and find inspiration.



555 Monroe
555 Monroe NW



Blue Bridge Sculpure Garden
Blue Bridge



Ah-Nab-Awen Park
Upper Park & Lower Bowl



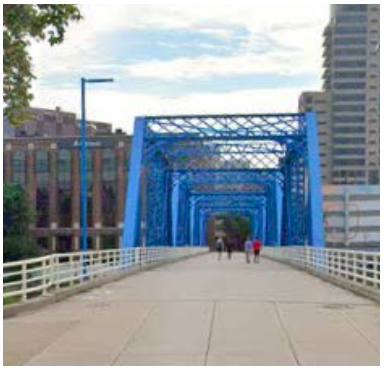
Grand Rapids Sister Cities Plaza
230 Pearl St. NW



Vacant Storefronts
Various Locations



Sixth Street Park
647 Monroe Ave. NW



The Blue Bridge



Corner of Cherry & S Curve
(Behind Studio Park)



DeVos Place
303 Monroe Ave. NW



Riverwalk



Van Andel Alley
130 Fulton St. W



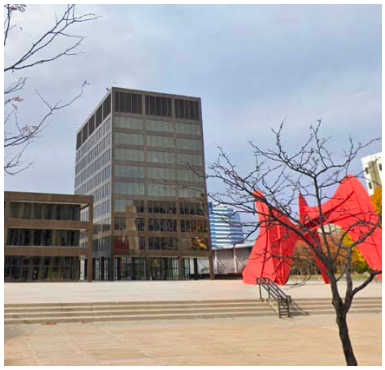
Gillett Bridge



Parking Ramps



Van Andel Plaza
130 Fulton St. W



Calder Plaza
300 Monroe Ave. NW



Alleyways



Studio Park Alley
123 Ionia Ave. SW



Studio Park Piazza
123 Ionia Ave. SW



Five Points
762 Midtown Arcade



Pekich Park
9 Cherry St. SW



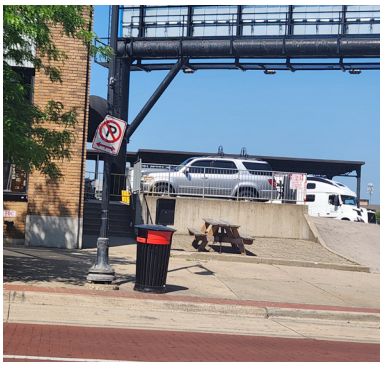
Green Space
300 Monroe Ave. NW



Green Space
Public Museum Parking Ramp



Fish Ladder Park
606 Front Ave. NW



Seating Area
133 Cesar E. Chavez Ave. SW



Ah-Nab-Awen Park Pavillion



Lacks Park
60 Front Ave NW



Heartside Park
301 Ionia Ave. SW



Cresent Park
301 Bostwick Ave. NE



Monroe Center
Between Ottawa & Monroe



Gerald R Ford Musuem Plaza
303 Pearl St NW



Lyon Square
296 Lyon St NW



Field & Fire Lot
820 Monroe Ave NW

Unkown Locations