

"To create, enhance, and promote a downtown experience that is welcoming, fun, and livable."

RDA Annual Report 2020



Credit: Alpha Digital

THE ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE

THE ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE IS A MINNESOTA 501c6 NONPROFIT CORPORATION COMPRISED OF A BROAD RANGE OF PEOPLE—REPRESENTING PROPERTY OWNERS, BUSINESS LEADERS, THE CITY AND OTHERS WITH A DIRECT STAKE IN ENHANCED BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS IN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT.

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Welcome



Credit: Alpha Digital

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Letters from Leadership

“THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESILIENCE AND PATIENCE THIS YEAR. NAVIGATING THROUGH A PANDEMIC WAS NOT PART OF THE PLAN A YEAR AGO, AND THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED.”



Jeanine E. Gangeness
Chair, RDA 2020
Downtown Rochester Resident
Winona State University-
Rochester (400 S Broadway)

Dear Rochester Downtown Community,

This public health crisis has disproportionately impacted businesses in the hospitality sector. Thank you for working with the RDA staff and neighboring businesses to adjust to the changes as we traversed through the closures, the safety measures, the businesses reopening, and then another round of closures. We all wish the year had been virus free. However, you have found new ways to do business.

Thank you for creating experiences where people could sit outside your businesses in expanded seating areas, stop by for takeout, or enjoy the lights of the trees that sprinkled downtown businesses. These creative approaches continue to inspire new ways for us all to thrive downtown. Your adaptability is bringing us to a bright future on the other side of this pandemic.

The Rochester Downtown Alliance staff and board have been identifying ways to expand service to the district with more messaging, by keeping downtown cleaner, by helping to distribute relief funding, and by advocating for downtown's needs throughout this year. I deeply appreciate the staff flexing to meet the challenges of this year. Thank you!

I wish for the new year to be filled with predictability, healing, and vaccinations. Together we have an opportunity to make 2021 a year of transitions from a pandemic back to a vibrant, engaged downtown!

Keep innovating,
Jeanine E. Gangeness
Chair, RDA 2020



Holly Masek
Executive Director, RDA

Dear Downtown Stakeholders,

Writing this annual report gave our team a valuable opportunity to reflect more kindly on a year I am sure many of us hope to forget soon. We hope it offers the same opportunity to you.

In a year with so many challenges – from a global pandemic, to a national civic crisis, to local construction impacts – collaboration, creativity, and kindness emerged downtown. Our stakeholders, our partner organizations, and RDA team members evolved and adapted their work. Downtown businesses developed products like frozen pizza and meal kits, launched outdoor dining areas, opened new retail concepts, created public art projects, gave generously to non-profits and first responders, and kept getting up each day to respond to every new challenge 2020 presented. The City of Rochester, Olmsted County, Experience Rochester, Rochester Area Economic Development, Inc., Destination Medical Center, Mayo Clinic, the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, the Diversity

Council, and RDA met weekly to discuss aid for downtown and wider Rochester. RDA, no longer able to bring crowds together, grew new skills: In 2020 we became grantmakers, information hubs on economic relief packages, virtual event producers, and public space maintainers.

Some projects this community undertook were successful. Some won't be repeated. But if we can take one lesson from this past year together, I hope the spirit of humility and experimentation that guided us through 2020 will remain with all of us in the future.

In 2020, the RDA team was deeply proud to be working with, and for, our downtown community. In a year of social distancing, we re-learned what makes downtown so special: being together.

In 2021, as soon as we can, we look forward to doing just that.

Thank you for being downtown.

Sincerely,

Holly Masek, Executive Director



Highlights, Down Low!

Be sure to check out the red boxes that appear on the bottom of the pages throughout this report to view some of the RDA 2020 highlights.



With marketing and communication efforts we have grown public awareness for downtown through 515 earned media mentions since January 2020.

◆ 59,710,228 reach

2020: An Updated Vision

A LIVING MISSION FOR A DYNAMIC AND GROWING CITY

In the fall of 2019 the RDA Board and team began the work of examining our existing mission statement, in recognition of the changing dynamics of the downtown neighborhood, and anticipation of RDA beginning to provide daily downtown services through the launch of our Clean and Safe Ambassador Program in 2020.

The previous statement, "To be a unique, vibrant, urban experience; a central gathering place for the community that is attractive, inviting, fun, and livable.", emphasized efforts to grow downtown into a destination, with great events, amenities, and institutions to experience.

After examining the mission statements of similar organizations across the country, holding

subcommittee and full Board discussions, the RDA Board adopted the following statement in the spring of 2020:

**"TO CREATE, ENHANCE, AND PROMOTE
A DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE THAT IS
WELCOMING, FUN, AND LIVABLE."**

The new statement captures the active, daily role RDA plays in positively impacting downtown's environment and success. The RDA Board also wished underscore that downtown is a place and an experience that should feel welcoming to everyone, regardless of their background.



Credit: Alpha Digital



Aired a **Downtown is Here for You** campaign on KTTC and The Current following the conclusion of construction in August/September.

◆ 15,000 impressions

Meet The Team



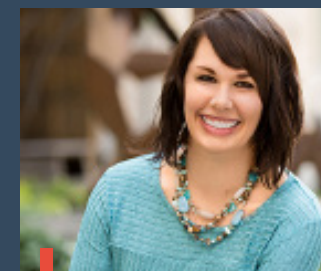
HOLLY MASEK
Executive Director

Holly Masek brings expertise in public space management, communications, urban planning, and hospitality. Before joining the RDA, she held positions in private real estate, consulting, and government in Boston. She has a master's degree in urban planning.



KARLI MCELROY
Senior Director of Placemaking

Karli is responsible for the creation and development of innovative and collaborative placemaking projects within downtown Rochester. She works closely with downtown businesses and partners to help the community envision how we see our downtown spaces differently.



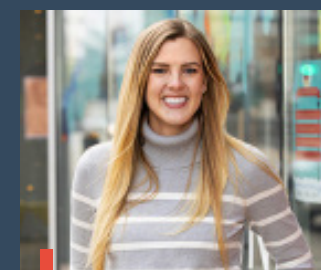
KATIE ADELMAN
Director of Content and Communications

Although a native of west-central Minnesota, Katie considers Rochester a second home. She received an associate degree in digital art and design from Rochester Community and Technical College and a bachelor's degree in mass media with an emphasis in public relations from Minnesota State University, Mankato.



MONIKA KOPET
Director of Events and Strategic Partnerships

Monika received her bachelor's degree from Metropolitan State University for Communications/Violence Prevention with a minor in Psychology. A Twin Cities native, she moved to Rochester to be closer to her fiancé and his daughter. Monika is passionate about community service and her two rescue dogs.



LAUREN CONTRERAS
Administrative Coordinator

Lauren moved to Rochester in 2019 from Seattle, WA. Prior to joining RDA, Lauren was a program manager for Amazon Prime Video. She is a lover of film and TV, design, podcasts, trivia, and all living things, especially her miniature dachshund, Honey.

CORE VALUES

1. We're the Downtown Experts-

Downtown Rochester is our focus. Everything we do, we have Downtown in mind, constantly providing events, programs, and service that meet our vision.

2. Build it Together -

Create and maintain an environment where we are better off collectively than we are individually.

3. Strive for Excellence -

We are dedicated to excellence. Our quest embraces creativity, innovation, and hard work. We pride ourselves on being accessible and approachable to everyone. Our #1 priority is the quality of our events, programs, and services.

4. Be Passionate -

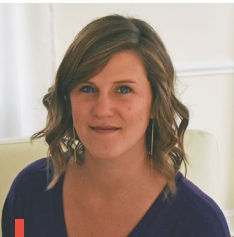
We bring passion and a positive attitude to all that we do.

5. Have Fun -

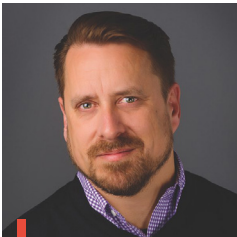
We have fun with everything that we do.

Board of Directors

The RDA Board of Directors sets the strategic direction for and provides oversight to the organization. The 2020 RDA Board of Directors consists of 20 members from 19 unique downtown entities. Board member elections take place in the fall of each year.



NAURA ANDERSON
Threshold Artists



PAUL ARMON
Armon Architecture



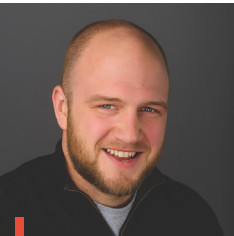
JOHN BEATTY
Dunlap & Seegar P.A.



JODY CHAMBERS
Bremer Bank Wealth Management



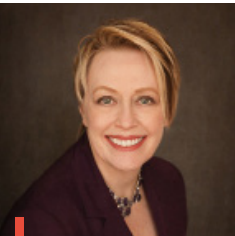
CYLE ERIE
ISG



CHRIS FIERST
The Half Barrel Bar & Kitchen



WILL FORSMAN
Café Steam



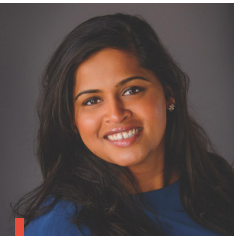
JEANINE GANGENESS
Winona State University Rochester



JAY HESLEY
University of Minnesota Rochester



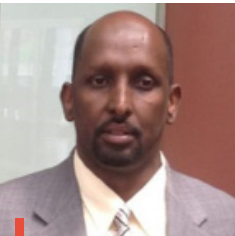
JOHN MURPHY
Mayo Clinic



SHRUTHI NAIK
Mayo Clinic/Vyraid Inc.



MAYOR KIM NORTON
City of Rochester



OMAR NUR
Somali American Social Service Association



AARON OLSON
University of Minnesota Rochester



JAMIE RADKE
Titan Development



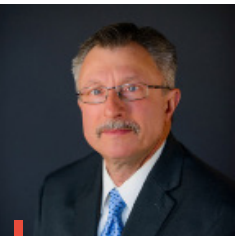
ANGIE RICHARDS
Avra Hospitality



PATRICK SEEB
Destination Medcial Center



KAYLA SHURSON
Lund Tax & Accounting

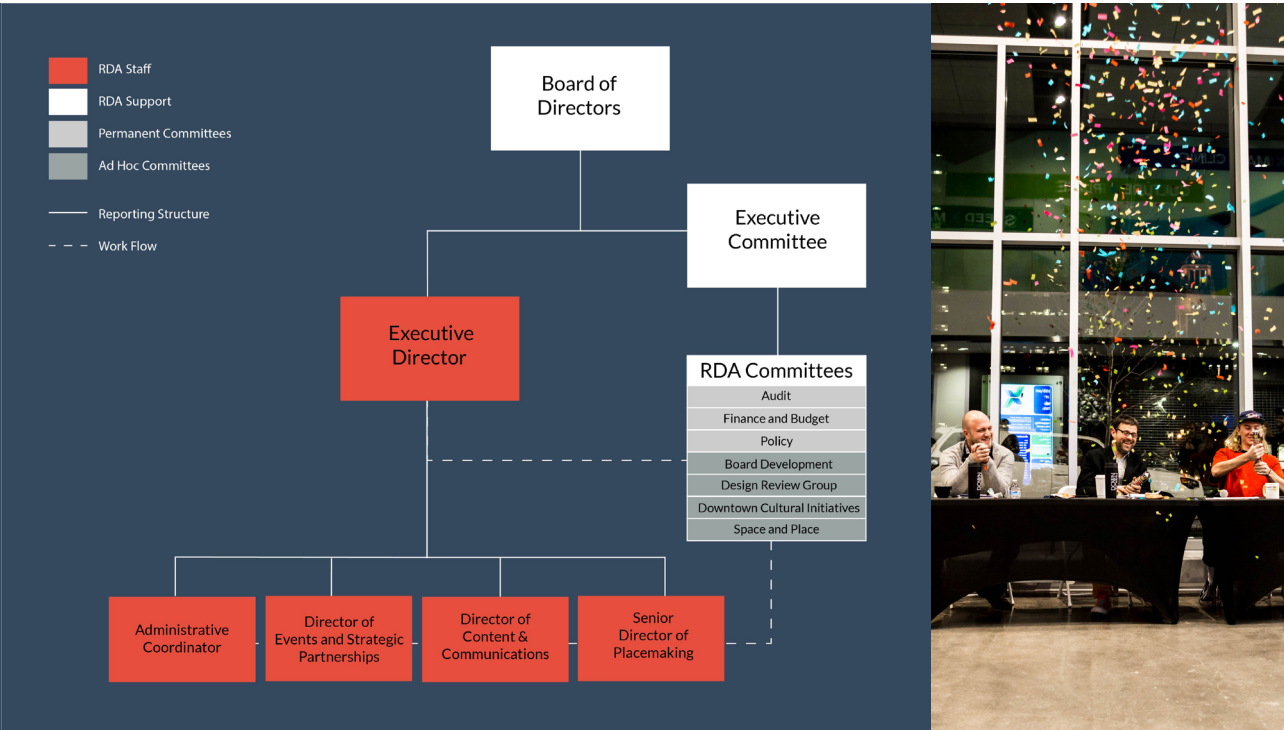


TERRY SPAETH
City of Rochester



JOE WARD
Experience Rochester

2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	
Jeanine Gangeness, Chair	John Beatty, Policy Chair
Shruthi Naik, Vice Chair	Will Forsman, Board Development Chair
Kayla Shurson, Secretary/Treasurer	Patrick Seeb, Space and Place Chair & Audit Committee Chair
Naura Anderson, Downtown Cultural Initiatives Chair	Jay Hesley, Past Chair



TRANSITIONING MEMBERS

THANK YOU JAY HESLEY AND JOE WARD, AND WELCOME TO AARON OLSON AND BUCKY BEEMAN!

Jay Hesley and Joe Ward will complete their final year on the RDA Board of Directors in 2020. The RDA is grateful for the years of dedicated service and leadership both Jay and Joe have offered to the organization, and community at large, over the years. The RDA was proud to confirm two new members of the Board prior to the end of 2020, Aaron Olson and Bucky Beeman. As a University of Minnesota

Rochester, Aaron will represent the growing student population in downtown while serving as the RDA's first university student ex-officio seat on the Board. A property owner, active community member, and downtown resident, Bucky Beeman brings multiple perspectives, great vision, and creativity to the Board. We look forward to the future with Aaron and Bucky on board.

JAY HESLEY

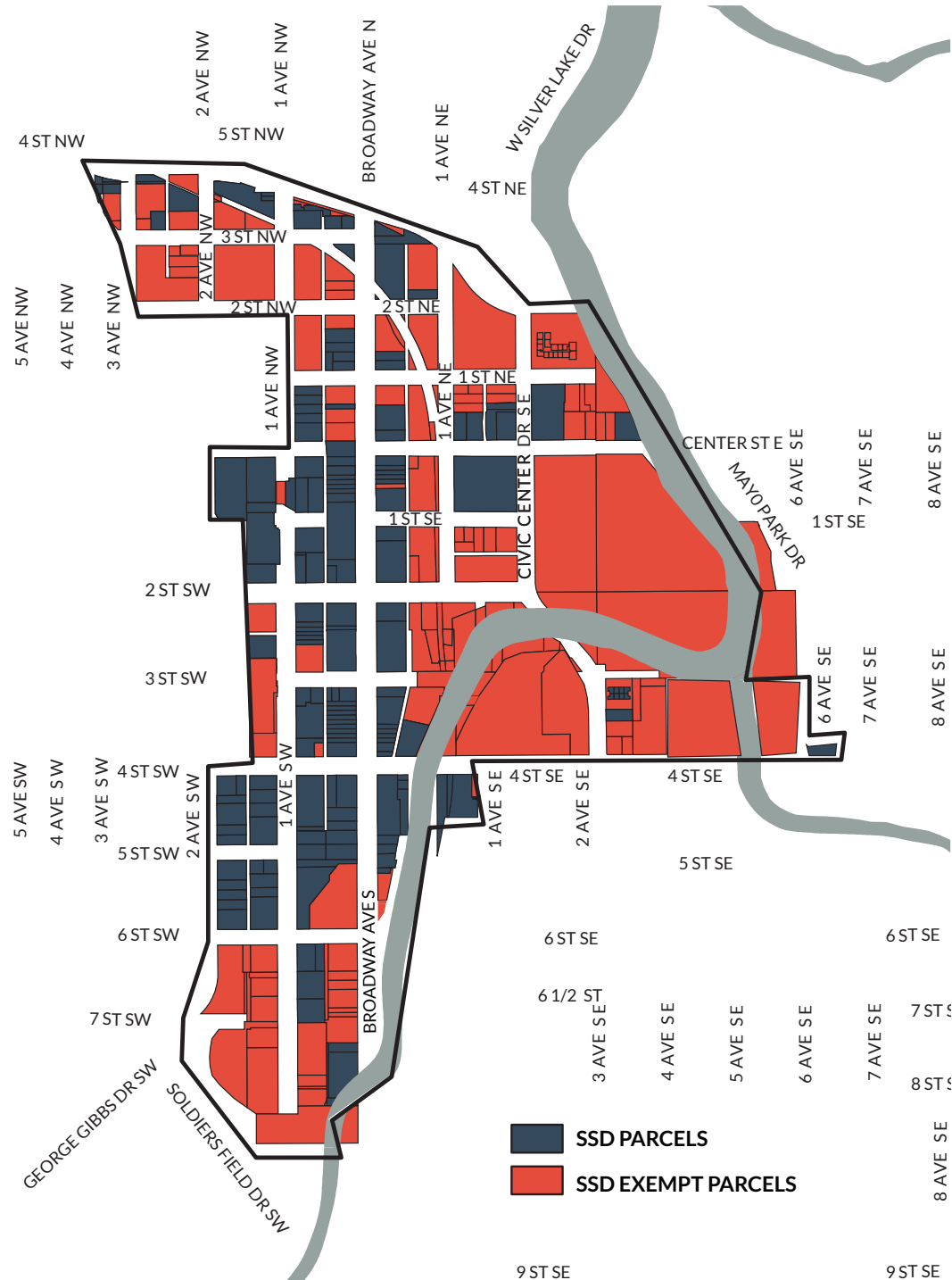
Past Board Chair

Rochester is a great place to be and Downtown Rochester is a great place to live, work, eat, drink and shop. It has been a pleasure and a learning experience to be a part of the RDA over the past few years. Every time I think Rochester's downtown has peaked there is always another level higher, or another gear, that allows us to continue to move forward. It has been a pleasure to serve as a member of the RDA Board of Directors. Your current Board leadership is an amazing group and I look forward to enjoying all the wonderful and dynamic options available only in Downtown Rochester.



Special Service District Map

RDA is funded by a self-imposed levy paid by commercial property owners located in the downtown service district. The special service district is comprised of 44 blocks.



Featured 17 downtown stakeholders in Community Spotlight videos highlighting generosity and reliance of our downtown business community in spring.

◆ 1,010 total web pageviews on blogs ◆ 735 total YouTube views ◆ 6,207 impressions

2020 Strategic Priorities

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic's major interruptions to the services RDA offers, and downtown's typical business patterns, RDA remained focused on many of its strategic priorities for 2020.



ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

After significant turnover in both leadership and staff in 2019, RDA team and Board identified streamlining internal operations and employee retention as major priorities for 2020. The organization has improved bookkeeping functions, operationalized annual audits, and begun to transition to a new stakeholder database. In the past, staff turnover at RDA has caused major challenges to the organization's ability to produce events and other programs. Staff were maintained through 2020, with RDA utilizing furloughs and pay reductions to manage through periods of uncertainty. This team and this Board are committed to downtown and to the organization, and RDA will continue to invest in their growth and engagement.



PROVISION OF DAILY DOWNTOWN SERVICES

In summer of 2020, RDA launched its Clean and Safe Ambassador Program following more than a year of study, stakeholder engagement, and Board review. Major program funders include Mayo Clinic and the City of Rochester. The program's core services include cleaning, safety, customer service, hospitality, livability, and outreach. In 2020, our new ambassadors focused on disinfecting surfaces in response to COVID-19 pandemic and maintaining public spaces. 2020 also saw new demand on public spaces, as outdoor dining became increasingly popular as a safe option during the pandemic. RDA purchased new bistro furniture and refurbished benches for Peace Plaza and Central Park, invested in enhanced horticulture, and worked with ambassadors to ensure new spaces were regularly cleaned and disinfected.



EVENT AND PROGRAM EVOLUTION

When we kicked off 2020, we imagined a relocated Thursdays Downtown, reducing waste at events, and increased diversity in exhibitors, entertainment, and visitors at our events. We did not imagine rooftop pop-up concerts, virtual craft markets, drive-thru parades, and live-streaming events. Every event after SocialICE evolved in some way for 2020. We were able to maintain our third goal of increasing diversity in our booked performers with 60% of Virtual Thursdays performers, 63% of Sidewalk Sessions performers, and 86% of the artists in the Utility Box Art Program representing minority groups.



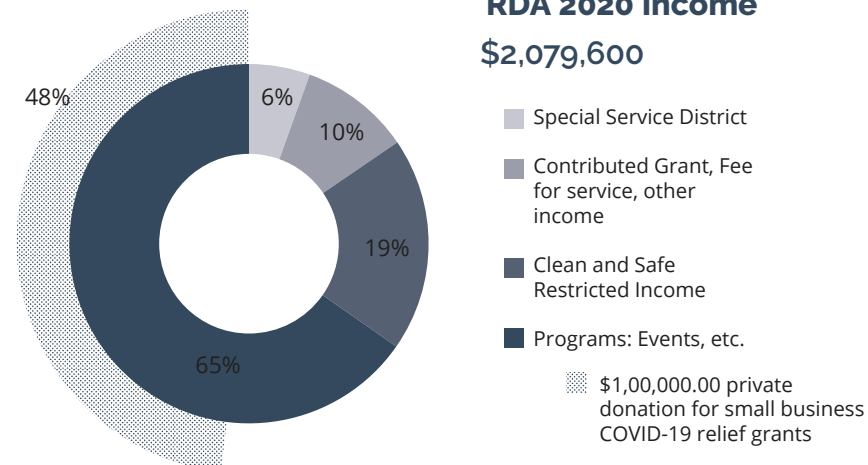
Credit: Alpha Digital

Finances

The COVID-19 pandemic required the Rochester Downtown Alliance, like most organizations, to carefully monitor and adjust its financial strategies in response to uncertainties.

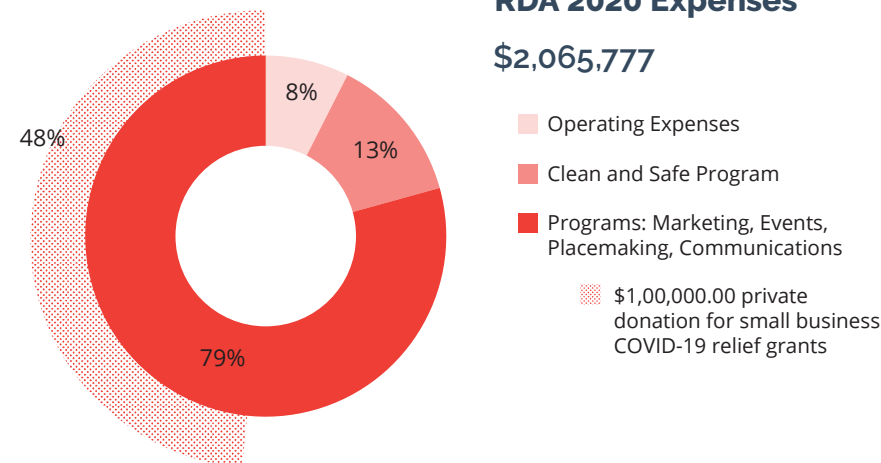
RDA 2020 Income

\$2,079,600



RDA 2020 Expenses

\$2,065,777

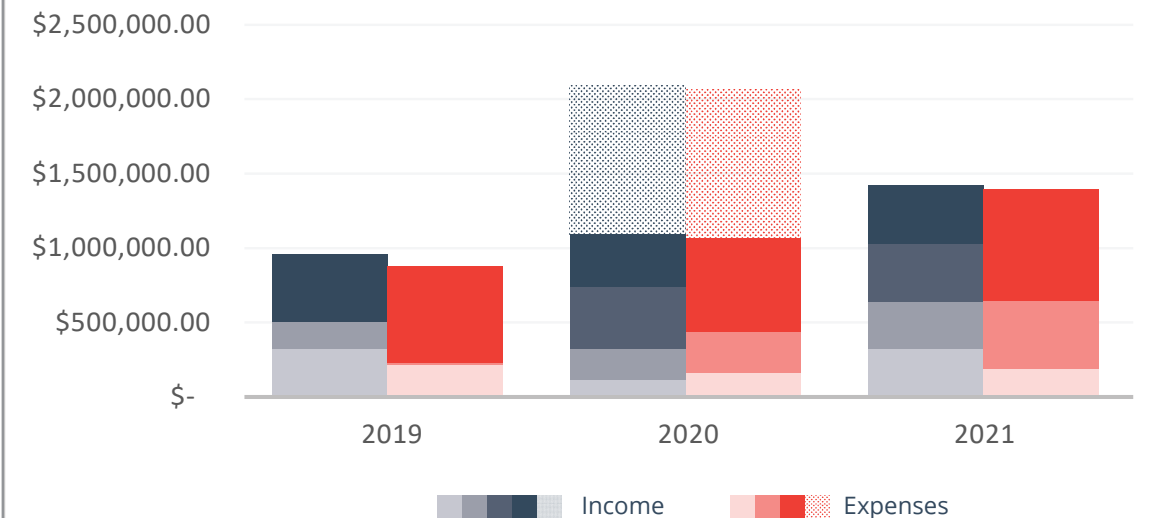


RDA managed a \$1,000,000 COVID-19 relief grant for small businesses. Thus, the 2020 budget appears significantly larger than it would in a typical year.

CHALLENGES FACED:

- ◆ RDA typically self-generates up to 33% of its revenue through large events like Thursdays Downtown. Event revenue in 2020 was reduced by 79%.
- ◆ In 2020, RDA was scheduled to receive \$324,750 in special service district levy (approximately 25% of the projected annual budget). To grant hardship relief to many property owners, Olmsted County offered the opportunity to delay property tax payment in 2020. This also translated to delayed SSD levy transfer. As of February 2021, RDA has received \$114,262 (35%) of the 2020 levy.
- ◆ As a 501c6, RDA did not qualify for many of the initial COVID-19 relief programs available to 501c3 non-profits.

RDA Income and Expenses 2019-2021



	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budgeted
RDA Income			
Special Service District	\$299,584	\$114,262	\$324,750
Contributed, Grant, Fee for Service, Other	\$202,057	\$207,300	\$311,822
Clean and Safe Restricted	\$-	\$400,000	\$392,500
Programs	\$455,216	\$1,358,037	\$362,655
Total Income	\$956,857	\$2,079,600	\$1,391,727
RDA Expenses			
Operating Expenses	\$216,516	\$154,553	\$183,344
Clean and Safe Program	\$15,629	\$273,188	\$457,700
Programs	\$647,681	\$1,638,035	\$750,682
Total Expenses	\$879,826	\$2,065,777	\$1,391,726

RDA voluntarily began undergoing an annual audit beginning with our 2018 fiscal year. Following this process, we have determined that 83% of staff costs (salary, benefits, payroll taxes) is dedicated program delivery (reflected in Program totals), 13% to management (Operations), and 4% to fundraising (Operations).



Restricted funding for RDA's Clean and Safe Ambassador Program is received early in the calendar year, but the program contract renews in July. This makes net income appear higher than in previous years.

RDA RESPONSE:

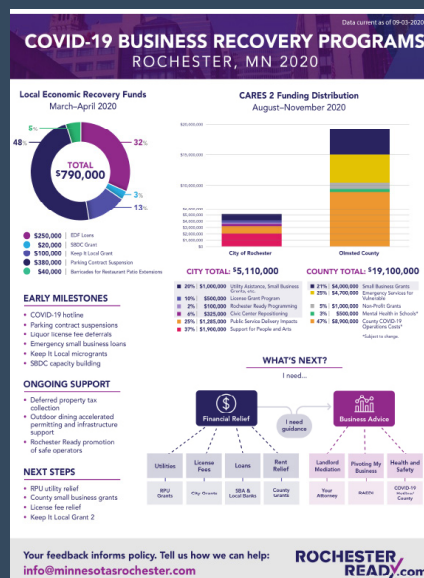
- ◆ With large gatherings not possible, RDA shifted to passive programs, virtual events, and grant assistance, and made a goal of ensuring each program would be revenue neutral through partnerships.
- ◆ In response to financial uncertainty, RDA reduced operating budget but prioritized retaining staff with furloughs, reduced benefits, and pay reductions.
- ◆ RDA did not utilize any reserves, which are steady at \$114,104.

2020 Collaborations

Since the onset of the pandemic in March, RDA has worked closely alongside the City of Rochester, Olmsted County, and peer organizations to support downtown through the challenges of 2020.



Credit: Alpha Digital



City of Rochester, Rochester Ready

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP/ ROCHESTER READY

The RDA represents downtown businesses in the Economic Development Working Group alongside City of Rochester, Olmsted County, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, Mayo Clinic, Destination Medical Center (DMC), Rochester Area Economic Development, Inc., (RAEDI), Experience Rochester, and the Diversity Council to offer short term relief and long term recovery for the business community during the pandemic.

- ◆ Keep It Local Grant Program: Economic recovery funds from the City of Rochester and DMC helped local small businesses innovate and collaborate to creatively to respond to pandemic-related challenges.
- ◆ Streamlined a process to allow downtown restaurants to expand their dining options.
- ◆ Administered 3 month free parking program for downtown, furnishing downtown businesses with three-hour passes to distribute to customers.

OLMSTED COUNTY

RDA partnered with Olmsted County and United Way of Olmsted County to create multi-language Facebook ads encouraging people living in downtown Rochester to complete the 2020 Olmsted County Census.



Downtown Small Business Relief Fund Recipient Responses

I am so excited to receive this grant at a time when it is most needed! I cannot express in words how important this is to me and for the survival of my small business in our wonderful Rochester downtown. I highly appreciate your efforts and the funder's generosity in creating and allocating this grant.

To the donors: These grants, THIS grant, is of immense help to us as we work through the pandemic. Thank you so much. We are grateful beyond words, and will show our gratitude in our commitment to downtown and our community for years to come.

I can't thank you enough for your generosity and support while we work through all of the changes and challenges of this year. We are committed to Rochester and will continue to support our staff and our community with the funds you have given to us.



Credit: White Space

MAYO CLINIC

Mayo Clinic engaged regularly with RDA to find ways to support the downtown community. Two highlights of this work include:

- ◆ The 2020 holiday Gift Rochester program developed by White Space, which resulted in Mayo supervisors purchasing \$257,000 in employee recognition gifts directly from downtown businesses.
- ◆ Mayo Clinic donated \$1,000,000 to create the Downtown Small Business Relief Fund, which provided grant awards to downtown Rochester businesses with demonstrated need.



CITY OF ROCHESTER

- ◆ The RDA advocated for improved construction site practices downtown, including provision for protected pedestrian walkways, to be codified in January 2021.
- ◆ RDA staff walked with representatives from City Public Works and Destination Medical Center every other week, to better coordinate major construction projects downtown.



Launched a partnership with local food blogger CHOOCHOO-ca-CHEW and the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce to ensure that customers have downtown businesses' most updated downtown dining information.

- ◆ 14,166 pageviews (Mar- Dec) ◆ 4:13 average time on page



From March through end of year, sent 70+ Stakeholder Update emails summarizing key updates related to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new initiative launched in response to the accelerated pace of news being released.

Clean and Safe Program

GREAT DOWNTOWNS DON'T JUST HAPPEN, THEY ARE ACTIVELY BUILT AND MAINTAINED THROUGH THE COOPERATION OF MANY DIFFERENT PARTS.

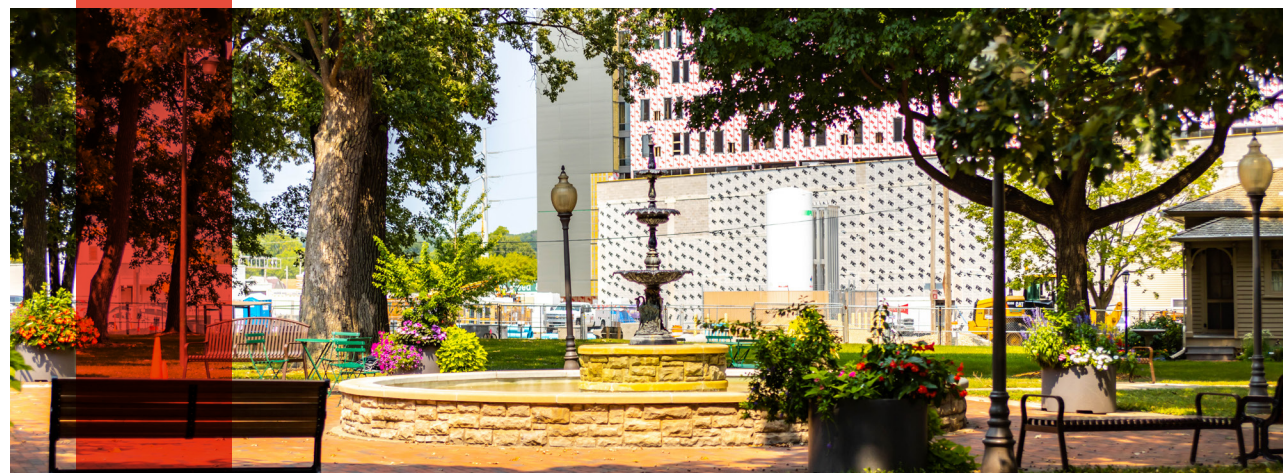
On July 1 RDA launched the Clean and Safe Ambassador Program in downtown Rochester. The program provides cleaning, safety, and hospitality services to the 44-block special service district (SSD) seven days a week.

Clean and Safe Ambassador Programs are a cost-effective way to supplement, but not replace, the City of Rochester's work by bringing additional improvements and paying attention to the details of our downtown's public spaces. Our Clean and Safe Ambassador program can offer several supplementary services and resources not previously available to downtown businesses.



BENEFITS TO DOWNTOWN

- ✓ Exterior cleaning services such as graffiti, biohazard, and litter removal.
- ✓ Safety escorts for employees during Ambassador business hours.
- ✓ In-person updates about downtown resources and opportunities.
- ✓ Regular monitoring and communication of safety and livability concerns in downtown to the City of Rochester



If you have any questions or feedback regarding the Clean and Safe Ambassador Program please contact Tom Claymon, Clean and Safe Operations Manager at tclaymon@blockbyblock.com or Karli McElroy, RDA Senior Director of Placemaking at kmcelroy@rdowntownalliance.com.

MARK CURRIE

GM/Co-Owner, Creative Cuisine

I have worked in Downtown Rochester for 30 years and have never seen an effort like this pay off so directly...our 'Clean Ambassador' program is exactly what is needed to meet and exceed the expectations of all of our Downtown visitors.



KRISTIN HAAS

Branch Manager, Associated Bank

I just wanted to let you know how impressed I am with the amazing job the ambassadors are doing. From someone that spends a lot of time downtown I have been thrilled with the difference they have made in such a short time.



ANA GOTMER

Operations Manager, Rochester Art Center

I just wanted to extend my thanks for cleaning our sidewalks today! I am so SO impressed by how prompt you and your team of hard worker were. Grateful to have the clean and safe ambassadors helping around town - I wish everyone had this resource!



CLEAN AND SAFE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

JULY - DECEMBER 2020
BY THE NUMBERS

- 6,535  PIECES OF INFRASTRUCTURE CLEANED & DISINFECTED
- 930  BAGS OF TRASH COLLECTED
- 753  HOSPITALITY ASSISTS
- 707  MARKS OF GRAFFITI REMOVED
- 689  WEEDS REMOVED FROM BLOCK FACES
- 280  BIOHAZARDS CLEANED
- 165  HOT SPOTS & BLOCK FACES POWER WASHED



To contact the Clean and Safe Ambassadors for public litter, waste, graffiti, removal, sidewalk cleaning, general info, or safety escorts. Please contact 507-316-7511. In case of emergency or to report crimes please contact call 911.

OUR AMBASSADORS ARE IN THE STREETS TOGETHER WITH OUR DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES CREATING A BEAUTIFUL AND WELCOMING CITY.

Placemaking

Improving vital outdoor public spaces for downtown, including new/refurbished furniture, public art, and new horticulture in Peace Plaza and Central Park and beyond.



Credit: Alpha Digital

PEACE PLAZA

In summer and fall of 2020, an intentional effort was made to ensure the Peace Plaza was transformed into a safe public space for patrons to enjoy downtown. For this effort, the RDA partnered with Destination Medical Center (DMC), Experience Rochester, with feedback from Heart of the City businesses to add:

- Additional bistro tables and chairs
- Refurbishment of existing Peace Plaza benches
- Horticulture
- Wayfinding and COVID safety signage
- Mobile information kiosk
- Passive musical performances
- Sanitizing stations
- Regular cleaning by Ambassador staff

MICHAEL SMITH

Regional Director of Operations, Kahler Hospitality Group

The additional seating for outdoor dining along with the musical performances made for a great location for both locals and guests visiting Rochester, MN. It created more of a warm and inviting environment as well as an attraction for people to spend time during their day.

UTILITY BOX ART PROGRAM

The COVID-19 pandemic also significantly impacted the local artist community. In addition to facilitating CARES grant funding for our downtown business community, the RDA was pleased to work with the City of Rochester to use CARES funding to expand our Utility Box Art program originally started in 2010.

The RDA worked with a total of seven local artists to paint thirteen utility boxes in the downtown, and used the prep services of locally owned Frank's Painting to prime and clear coat the utility boxes. We are thankful for the opportunity to assist these artists and provide the community a safe opportunity to enjoy local art.

Find the names of more local artists and their works throughout this report.

'Wanderer' by, Tiffany Alexandria

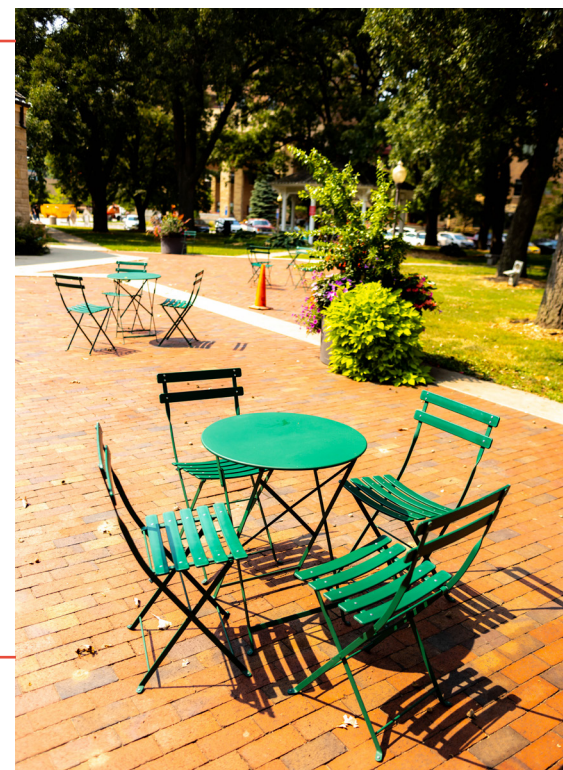


Credit: Alpha Digital

CENTRAL PARK

In January of 2020, the RDA announced at our annual meeting to look out for improved horticulture, regular cleaning, musical performances, and the replacement of existing furniture with classic bistro tables and chairs. Despite many of the challenges this year, we were able to implement all those changes to provide a safe space for nearby residents, employees, and visitors to the park.

In 2021, are eager to further enhance the park with our outdoor game cart, partnering with local groups to further enhance horticulture, and continuing with passive musical performances, additional seating, and regular cleaning.



Credit: Alpha Digital



Credit: Alpha Digital

MAIN STREET MAGIC: FESTIVAL OF TREES

This year, a portion of Festival of Trees' uniquely designed holiday trees were displayed in eleven downtown storefronts November 27 - December 31, 2020. All trees were viewable from the outdoors to provide a safe holiday experience for downtown guests.

Festival of Trees is a holiday-themed event created by Hiawatha Homes Foundation to kick-off the holiday season for the community. The Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) was pleased to host a portion of Festival of Trees in downtown Rochester with support from Destination Medical Center, Lund Tax & Accounting, Hiawatha Homes, and a number of our downtown businesses and property owners.

Events and Programming

Our 2020 events calendar kicked off with an exciting start, producing SocialICE with record-breaking attendance. Starting in March, we pushed ourselves to develop pandemic-appropriate programs that kept downtown top of mind.



Credit: Alpha Digital

Social Ice February 6-8

Rochester celebrated a record-breaking three days of ice, fun, and themed cocktails like never before in 2020. In addition to the traditional elements of life-sized ice sculptures, the Wall of ICE, and 5 themed bars, we implemented exciting new features such as non-alcoholic drink and food vendors, curling, and community contents offering more than \$200 in giveaways!

Attendees
67,500+ New Record!

Estimated Economic Impact
\$2.6 Million

Partners
22



Virtual Thursdays Downtown June 18-August 27

Typically a weekly summer staple of downtown Rochester, Thursdays Downtown combines arts, music, food and a vendor market into a block-party-style event every Thursday from June through August that brings approximately 20,000 people downtown each week. Based on official city and state event guidance, the RDA canceled the 2020 in-person version of Thursdays Downtown. Instead, Thursdays Downtown went virtual in 2020. The new event offered an online artisan market, food specials, and streamed musical entertainment that highlighted unique

Page Views
47,308 +17%

Live Music Acts
11

Estimated Media Reach
13 million



Credit: Tyler Aug

Sidewalk Sessions September and October

The Sidewalk Sessions Music Series showcased musical talent in public spaces in downtown Rochester weekdays through October, weather permitting. CARES funding and DMC support allowed RDA to book 120 small shows, and bring music safely to

Pageviews (Aug-Oct. 2020)
678

Performers
120

Partners
2



Summer Sale July 15-31

Summer Sale was expanded to a two-week period to allow flexibility for retailers to manage their inventory and allow customers more time and space to feel comfortable shopping. Customers were able to shop at their convenience and comfort level with in-store or online deals, which varied by each store. Many participating retailers pledged a commitment to implementing a specific set of measures to provide a safe experience through the Rochester Ready program. In addition to COVID-19, downtown retailers had to contend

Participating Stores
23 +10%

Facebook Ad Clicks
2,020 +504%

Facebook Ad Impressions
187,107 +1,118%



Credit: Alpha Digital

Here Comes Santa Claus and 12 Days of Magic November 16-27

We adapted our annual holiday event, which typically includes in-person family-friendly activities, to include COVID-19 responsive holiday programs and safe attractions including the 12 Days of Magic scavenger hunt, Kindness Tree donation drive for the Salvation Army, and a drive-thru parade featuring lighted trees and an appearance by

Estimated Parade Attendees
500+

Instagram Post Views
49,133

Facebook Event Reach
18,655



Small Business Saturdays November 28- December 19

Traditionally a day to support local business, Small Business Saturday boosts the economy and preserves neighborhoods in downtown Rochester and across the country. To encourage healthy shopping practices, we spread this event across four dates in-person, created new enhanced safety shopping hours for at-risk populations, and promoted online shopping with our

Participating Stores +44%
26

Page Views +88%
3,130

Average time on webpage page +145%
2:09

The RDA worked with seven local artists to paint thirteen utility boxes in the downtown. These works are part of the downtown ARTWALK program.



'Gilded Flowers',
Elizabeth Forsman



'For the Love of
Rochester Crows',
Jessalyn Finch



'Perspective',
Tierney Welter



'Native Strong',
Michelle Palmer



'Tell Me at
Midnight',
Philip Taylor



'Good Vibes',
Maggie Panetta

Credit: Alpha Digital

Grants and District Support



On Track Boutique Before



On Track Boutique After

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Despite the difficulties of the year, investment in our downtown continues. In 2020, three downtown businesses were approved for the RDA's Façade Improvement Grant, which provides property and business owners grant assistance for up to 50% of the cost of facade improvements, not to exceed \$20,000.

The City of Rochester approved and allocated an additional \$100,000 in Façade Improvement Grant funds available on a first come first serve basis to downtown businesses. Design Assistance for an additional \$2,000 may be granted to procure a licensed design professional/architect for the RDA Design Review process.



Unused grant funds will roll over into 2021, and if interested please contact Karli McElroy, RDA Senior Director of Placemaking at kmcelroy@rdowntownalliance.com

PASQUALE PRESA

Pasquale's Neighborhood Pizzeria

You do good and good comes back to you.' We are very thankful for the amazing community we live in! This grant will help us continue to find way to help our community by providing the best pizza, comfort, safety, and more for everyone's soul.



Keep It Local Grants in Action

With a Keep it Local Grant award, Fagan Studios is creating an online store for Chinese Ching customers to order to-go food and help establish an online presence. "We had to close our restaurant for six weeks at the beginning of the pandemic," said Kunthea Meach of Chinese Ching's. "By establishing an online presence, we hope to increase awareness of our restaurant to more downtown workers and visitors staying in hotels."

KEEP IT LOCAL, COVID-19 INNOVATORS GRANT

The Keep it Local, COVID-19 Innovators Grant Program was developed in March of 2020 as an additional source of relief for the Rochester business community facing the challenges presented by the pandemic. This program aimed to meet business needs not currently being addressed by wider relief programs, to support innovation and entrepreneurship within our community, and to highlight and connect talented businesses and service providers within Rochester.

With financial contributions from the City of Rochester and Destination Medical Center and through City allocated Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) the RDA was able to hold two rounds of this program in both Spring and Fall of 2020 and award over \$300,000.00 in grants to the city-wide Rochester business community.

April 2020 Keep It Local Summary

Source of Funds	City of Rochester and Destination Medical Center
Grant Award Total	\$100,000.00
Maximum Grant Amount	\$2,000.00
Grants Awards	55
Unique Service Providers	35

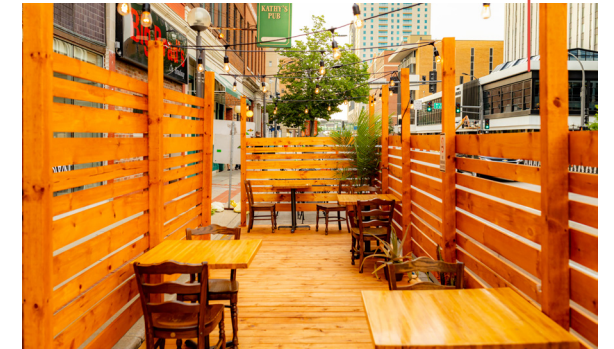
October 2020 Keep It Local Summary

Source of Funds	CARES
Grant Award Total	\$228,500.00
Maximum Grant Amount	\$20,000.00
Grants Awards	30
Unique Service Providers	41
Awards for Women, Minority or Veteran Owned Businesses	14 (\$106,929.00)

SIDEWALK CAFE EXPANSION ASSISTANCE GRANT

When the State of Minnesota enacted indoor capacity restrictions for our bar and restaurant stakeholders in May of 2020, the RDA staff worked quickly with the City of Rochester to develop the COVID-19 Sidewalk Café Expansion program. This grant utilized unused Façade Improvement Grant funds from 2019 to allow bars and restaurants to purchase furniture and equipment for expanded outdoor patios.

The bar and restaurant community creatively worked together to meet the challenges imposed by the pandemic. With city team support, pro bono design assistance, DMC funding for safety equipment, and design by Threshold Arts, 14 restaurants were able to obtain permits and grants to offer extended outdoor patio dining in alleys, parking spaces, and delivery lanes through the summer months and into the fall. Each establishment's outdoor spaces were beautiful, unique, and offered a safe, new experience for downtown residents, employees, and guests.



Cafe Steam



The Tap House



Chesters Kitchen & Bar



Victoria's Ristorante & Wine Bar



Half Barrel Kitchen and Bar

Downtown Small Business Relief Summary

Source of Funds	Mayo Clinic
Grant Award Total	\$1,000,000.00
Maximum Grant Amount	\$20,000.00
Grants Awards	85

HOLLY MASEK

RDA Executive Director

The incredible generosity of this gift underscores our community's faith in downtown Rochester's continued growth and success.



DOWNTOWN SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF GRANT

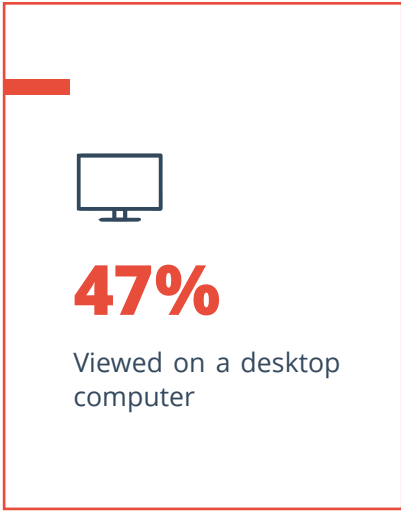
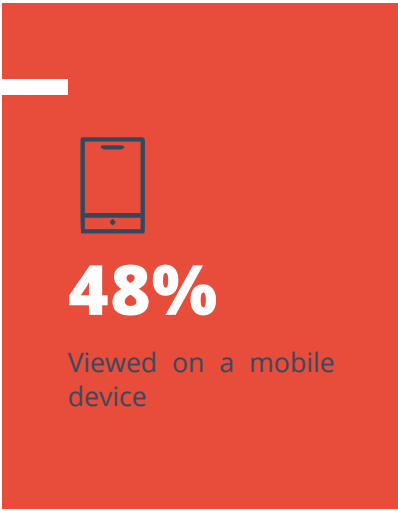
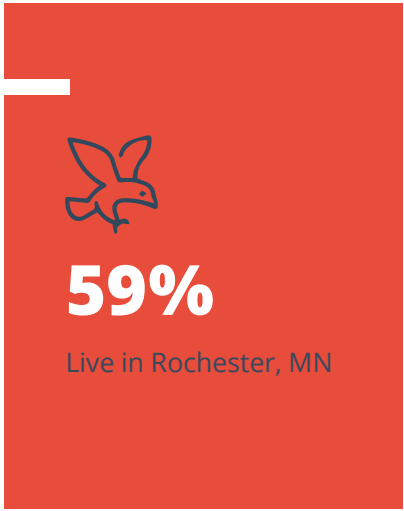
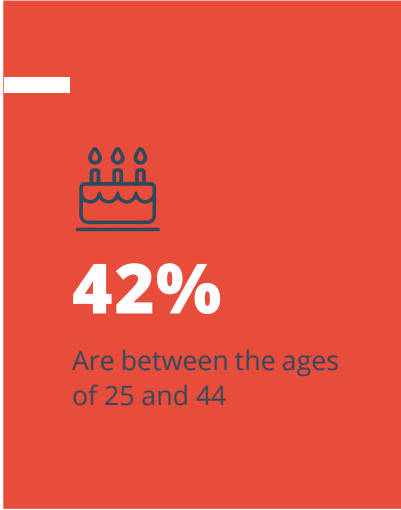
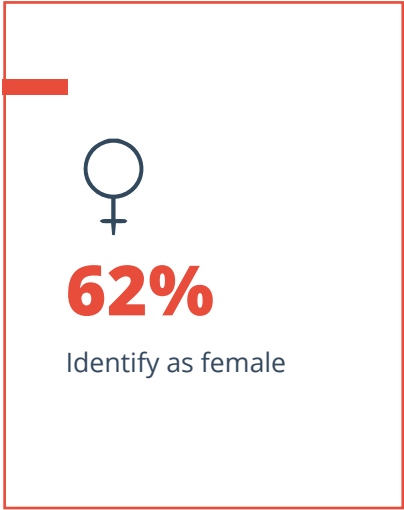
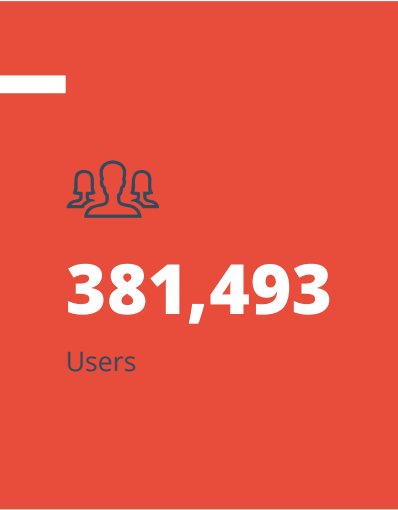
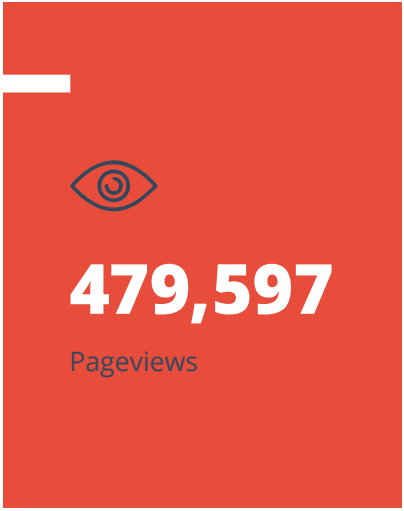
In the fall of 2020 the RDA was given the privilege of developing a grant program to administer the Downtown Small Business Relief Fund. This \$1,000,000 fund was established in collaboration with Mayo Clinic with the aim of supporting downtown's small business community and protecting downtown's vitality through this extremely challenging year. The Downtown Small Business Relief Fund offered grant awards ranging between \$2,000 and \$18,000 to downtown Rochester businesses based on a combination of demonstrated need, COVID-19 preparedness plan assessments, and demonstrated commitment to downtown.

Photo Credit: Alpha Digital

Marketing

DATA FROM JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2020

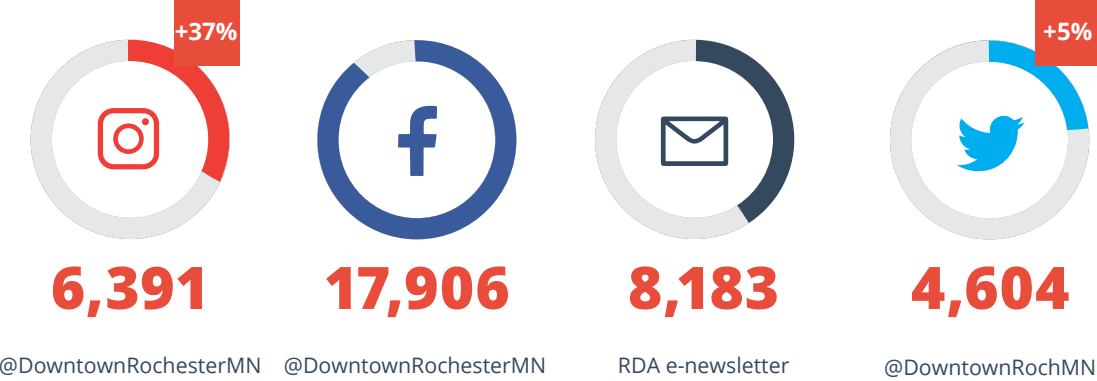
WEBSITE DATA



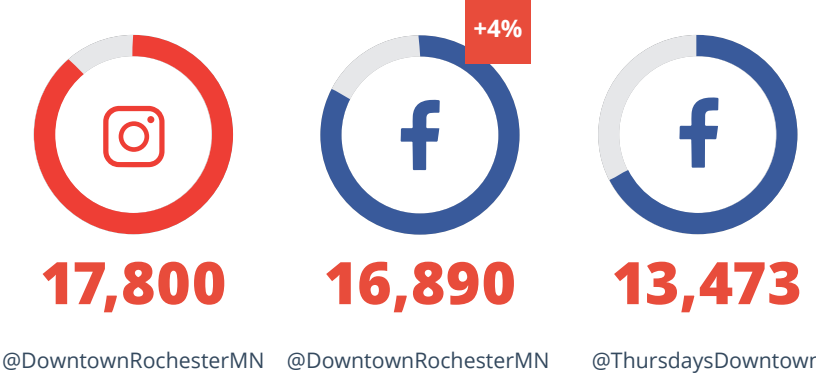
Left to right, Benedict's, SocialICE curling (credit: Alpha Digital), Amanda Grace performing in Central Park for Virtual Thursdays

SOCIAL MEDIA

FOLLOWERS/SUBSCRIBERS



NUMBER OF LIKES



Instagram Top Nine Photos of 2020



Planning for 2021

The following strategic priorities grew from the August 2020 strategic planning work performed by RDA Board members. The strategic planning process included outreach to representative group of downtown stakeholders and other RDA audiences, including: food & beverage operators; street, skyway, and subway level retailers; hotels; residents; employees; students; and visitors.

1

COVID-19 RESPONSE

RDA will provide pandemic-related support to stakeholders for as long as necessary by generating up-to-date communication; representing downtown to the City of Rochester, Olmsted County, and Mayo Clinic; providing direct grant and technical support as required; promoting and marketing downtown; providing clean and safe public spaces; and generating relevant events and programs that draw foot traffic while complying with state and federal guidelines.

2

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

To raise awareness of downtown and engage collaborative partners in downtown's economic health, RDA will focus on growing relationships with:

- Mayo Clinic, including administration, employees, and patients.
- Downtown and core neighborhood residents, as potential customers.
- Downtown's real estate community, to work together to reduce vacancy.

3

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In a year of remote work and social distancing, communication became both challenging and vitally important. Both RDA staff and Board members are committed to continually improving communication with stakeholders in 2021 and into the future.

4

PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT

Outdoor spaces became critically important in 2020, as socializing and dining during the pandemic could most safely be undertaken in open air. We will build on that moment in 2021, with additional improvements to Peace Plaza and Central Park, as well as examining opportunities for waterfront enhancement.

5

DAILY DOWNTOWN SERVICES

Still in the first year of this program, downtown's Clean and Safe Ambassadors will continue to develop best practices to maintaining Rochester's downtown environment, and will grow their relationships with businesses, the hospitality community, Mayo Clinic, downtown residents, and our growing student population.

6

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

RDA will continue to represent downtown's interests in collaborations like the Rochester Ready group, and will providing research and advocacy support for initiatives such as extended outdoor dining in 2021.

7

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

RDA, alongside partner organizations across Rochester, will continue to examine the role it can play in representing Rochester's diverse community through Board membership, event representation, and new approaches to marketing and communications.

Rochester Strong, Staff Reflections



YMCA



Neon Green



The Tap House



Saladworks



Tangerine at Wild Flowers

This past year was incredibly busy for the RDA staff. Yet, despite creating and distributing an overwhelming amount of grant programs and funds, listening to and disseminating news updates for stakeholders, and re-tooling activities downtown to be safe for the public, I admit I have still felt tired, drained, and sometimes hopeless. However, what has given me strength this year and moving into 2021, was seeing our downtown community step up so positively to help one another, be creative, as well as give back to those in the community who are in need. I have no idea what 2021 will bring, but I do know the strength of our downtown businesses and community, and I do know if we continue to help one another, and focus on the good, we will overcome 2021's challenges and emerge better and stronger than before.

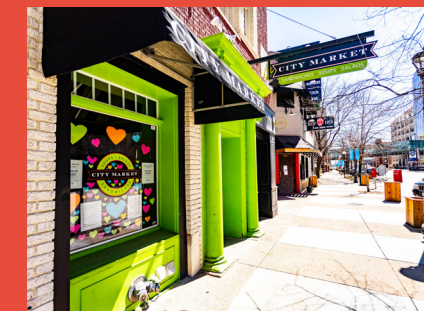
- Karli McElroy, Senior Director of Placemaking

We went out with a bang with SocialICE before knowing what Covid really was or how it would affect us. This year was hard for everyone in so many ways, and our strength and courage as the closest community I have ever been a part of is what got us through it, even in the darkest of times. We did everything we could to provide quality programs to help lift everyone's spirits in a time where we needed it more than ever.

- Monika Kopet, Director of Events and Strategic Partnerships

Times of crisis can bring amazing outcomes. In ten months we've seen new business models emerge, great generosity displayed, new collaborations formed, and a "Why-not-let's-just-try-it" attitude that I hope we can sustain into the future. I can't wait to see what our downtown community develops next.

- Holly Masek, Executive Director



City Market



Metronet, Virtual Thursdays



Cafe Steam



Fagan Studios



Credit: Alpha Digital

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