



BUILD IT

TOGETHER

**DOWN
TOWN**
Rochester, MN

ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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WELCOME



**“Together, we can build a better
Downtown that serves as the true
economic, civic, and cultural heart of
our community.”**

-Interim Executive Director Sarah Oslund

Let's Build It Together.

It's no secret that Downtown Rochester is in the midst of unprecedented growth and progress. Every day, we see more walkable amenities, unique spaces, and authentic-to-Rochester experiences available to the employees, residents, and visitors who frequent the heart of our community.

While each organization has its own unique plan outlining strategies about where it intends to go and how it hopes to get there, we all share a common vision toward building a better Downtown – and the best way to do that is **together**.

The Rochester Downtown Alliance's scope of work can sometimes seem broad, but we are exclusively dedicated to Downtown. From events and advocacy to marketing and promotion, we spend each day looking for creative ways to build a better Downtown, and we are proud to share our collective achievements for 2018. Together, we:

- Launched three new Downtown marketing campaigns – retail, services, and #MyDowntownRochMN – which reached hundreds of thousands of people and helped promote the diverse shops, services, and other businesses that make Downtown a great place to work, live, and visit.
- Attracted a record-breaking number of attendees to nearly all events and programs, including SocialICE, Bookworm Walk, and Movies in the Park.
- Began to more extensively explore the need for a cleaner, greener, and safer Downtown by initiating conversations with community organizations.

Most recently, we've initiated purposeful planning efforts to identify and activate Downtown alleys through art installations and aesthetic improvements. Research indicates that programming and beautification of underutilized spaces often increases perception of safety and reduces unwanted behaviors. We are excited to bring these – and many more – ideas to life in 2019.

In the pages to follow, you can see the Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) strives to provide the most value to Downtown stakeholders through maximum efficiency. In fact, more than 66 percent of the revenue powering our work is self-generated through events and initiatives or provided by our sponsors, and partners such as Mayo Clinic and the City of Rochester, leaving less than 33 percent of the RDA's funding to come from the Special Service District tax.

We've accomplished so much in the past year and are excited about the many opportunities we have for the coming year and beyond. Please consider partnering with us in 2019. Together, we can build a better Downtown that serves as the true economic, civic, and cultural heart of our community.

On behalf of the RDA Board of Directors, we truly appreciate your ongoing support and commitment to Downtown Rochester. Thank you for being an integral part of this great city we can be proud to call “home.”

With warmth and gratitude,
Sarah Oslund, M.A.
Interim Executive Director

TEAM

Interim Executive Director

Sarah Oslund

Senior Director of Placemaking

Karli McElroy

Director of Marketing & Design

Samantha Rossi

Director of Events & Strategic Partnerships

Meghann Southwick

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CONNECT

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Instagram: @DowntownRochesterMN

Twitter: @downtownrochmn



ROCHESTER DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE BOARD



“The quality of the people I’ve had the privilege to interact with in this role is mesmerizing, and their commitment to the organization is unmatched.”
-2018 Board Chair Al Mannino

2018 OFFICERS

Chair

Al Mannino
Mannino Consulting

Vice Chair

Brad Smith
People’s Food Co-op

Secretary/Treasurer

Jamie Radke
Titan Development

Board Development Chair

Angie Richards
*Downtown Rochester
Hilton Hotels*

DCI Committee Chair

Jeanine Gangeness
*Winona State
University - Rochester*

Policy Chair

Jay Hesley
*University of
Minnesota - Rochester*

Past Chair

Bern O’Brien
318 Commons

2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Naura Anderson
Castle Community

Paul Armon
Armon Architecture

Jody Chambers
Bremer Bank

Chris Fierst
The Half Barrel & Bar Buffalo

Mary Gastner
Experience Rochester

Mia Grimme
Counterpoint

John Murphy
Mayo Clinic

Shruthi Naik
Mayo Clinic

Patrick Seeb
Destination Medical Center (DMC)

Terry Spaeth
City of Rochester

Mission

To be a unique, vibrant, urban experience; a central gathering place for the community that is attractive, inviting, fun, and livable.

Purpose

To provide opportunities and support for Downtown Rochester.

Vision

Bringing Downtown to life through events, activation, and advocacy.

Organizational Values

We’re the Downtown Experts

Build It Together

Strive for Excellence

Be Passionate

Have Fun

The Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) saw many changes this year, one of which being a change in leadership, but to the credit of the current staff and interim leadership we were able to move forward without missing a beat. The Board of Directors also played a critical role in the success of the organization during this transition. The quality of the people I’ve had the privilege to interact with in this role is mesmerizing, and their commitment to the organization is unmatched.

Another change we have seen this year is the increased collaboration with stakeholders, the City of Rochester, Mayo Clinic, and other partnerships that we have nurtured through the year. They have helped push the organization to new heights and elevated the events, programs, and marketing initiatives set forward in the 2018 Strategic Priorities. Through these collaborations, we have been able to expand and engage over 200,000 people through our social channels and better connect with our Downtown Stakeholders.

As we reflect on 2018, I’m honored to have served as chair for such a dynamic and forward-thinking organization. I see nothing but opportunity and growth for 2019 and beyond.

With appreciation,
Al Mannino
2018 Board Chair

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2018 PRIORITIES

- Stakeholder Relations
- Marketing & Promotion of Downtown
- Programming & Events
- Collaborations
- Downtown Experts

NEW IN 2019

Organization Research, Direction, & Development

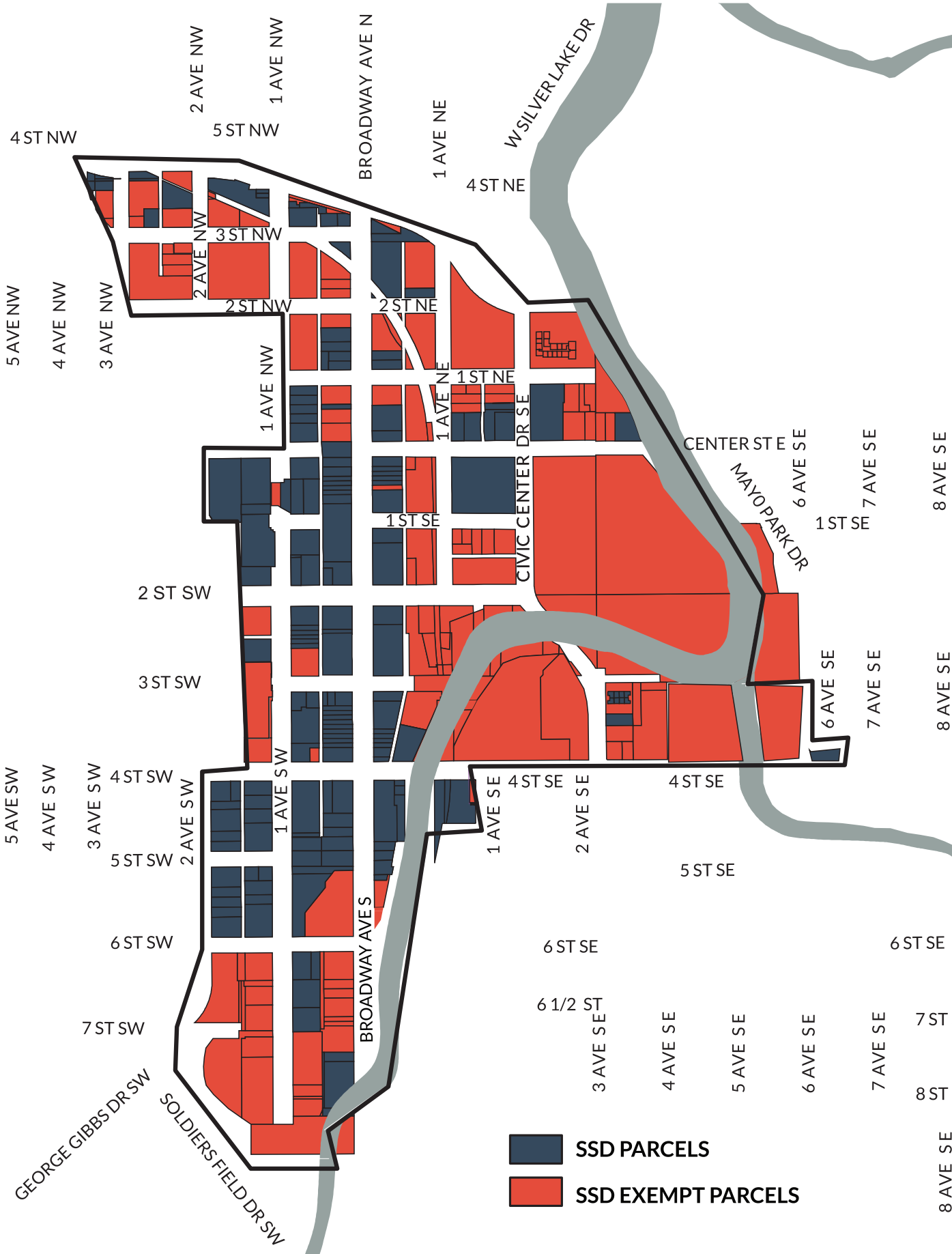
As we move into 2019, the Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) will continue to focus on our five existing Strategic Priorities while adding a sixth and increasingly essential item to the list: **Organizational Research, Direction, and Development.** As Downtown continues to evolve, so are the needs of our community. Therefore, in the coming year, the RDA Board and Staff will examine the current state of Downtown, identify needs and opportunities that fall within the scope of the RDA, and outline a long-term vision for the future of the organization. We are committed to demonstrating increased value to Downtown stakeholders as well as community residents, visitors, and patients.

Clean Green Safe: A safe and clean Downtown is key to a successful community. In 2019, we will explore ways to improve the cleanliness and perception of safety in Downtown while looking at opportunities to affordably and sustainably incorporate more beautification into the public realm.

Activation and Placemaking: Research shows that public spaces that are programmed and activated increase feelings of safety and often result in fewer instances of undesirable or criminal activity. In 2019, the RDA will collaborate with Downtown businesses and organizations to activate the alley of the 300 block between Broadway and First Avenue. Expect to see exciting new installations this spring.

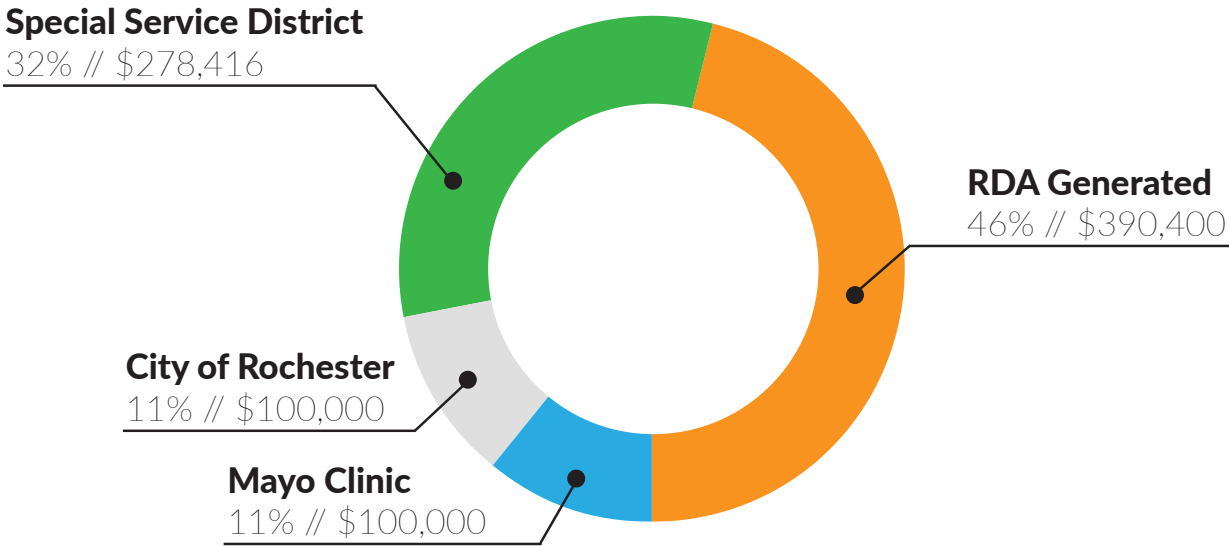
Special Service District (SSD) Boundaries: Downtown is growing – vertically and geographically. As the RDA seeks to demonstrate increased value to the SSD through new and enhanced initiatives, we will begin conversations with neighboring property owners to explore potential to expand the SSD boundaries, bringing programming, events, and activations to the greater Downtown.

“The Rochester Downtown Alliance is in an exciting time of organizational and strategic transition. Focusing on these six strategic priorities will position us for great things in 2019 and beyond.”
- 2019 RDA Board Chair
Brad Smith

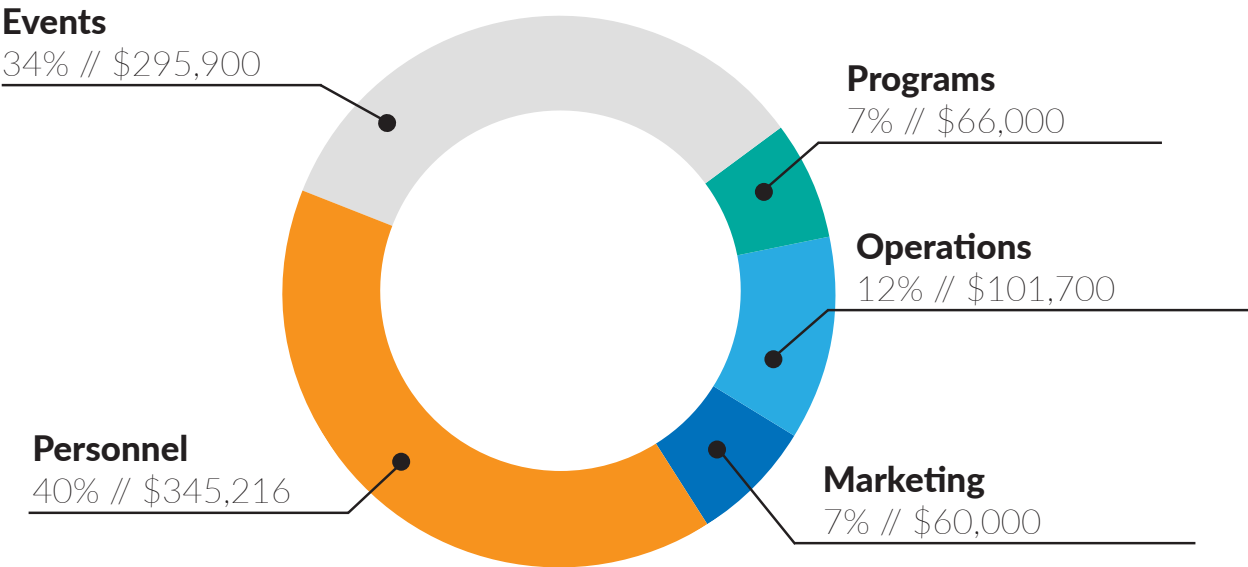


FINANCIAL REPORTS

2018 REVENUES



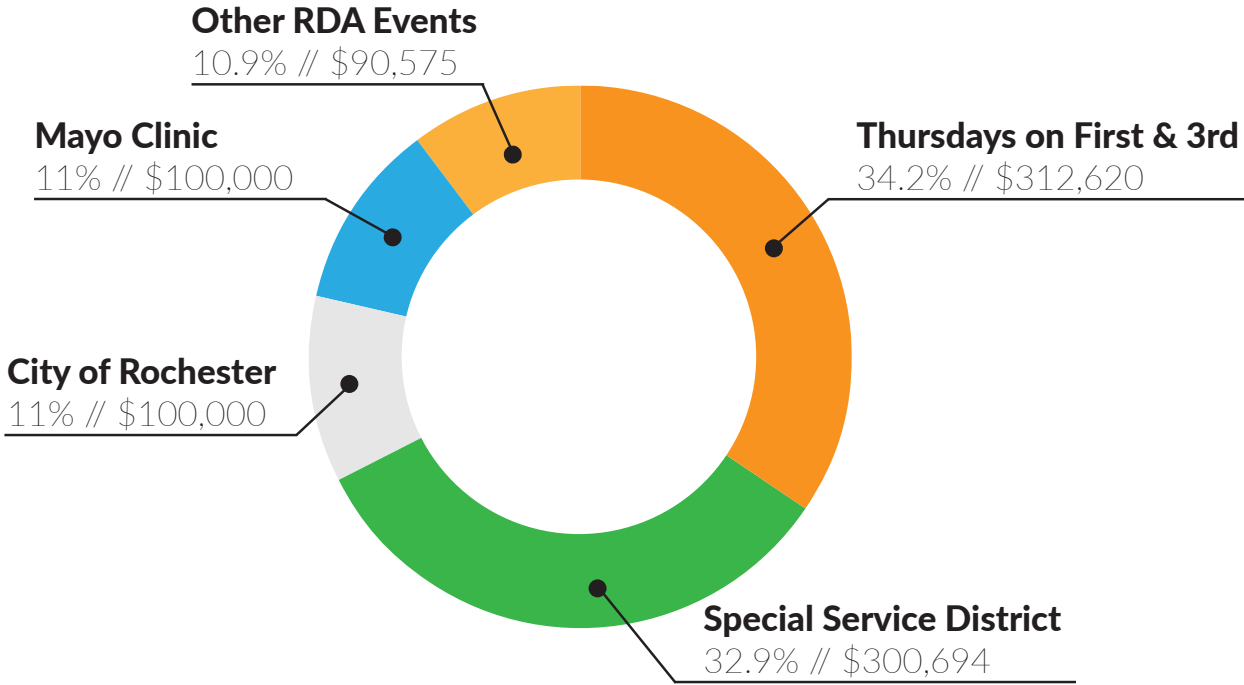
2018 EXPENSES



2019 PROJECTED REVENUES

Total Projected Revenues \$912,889

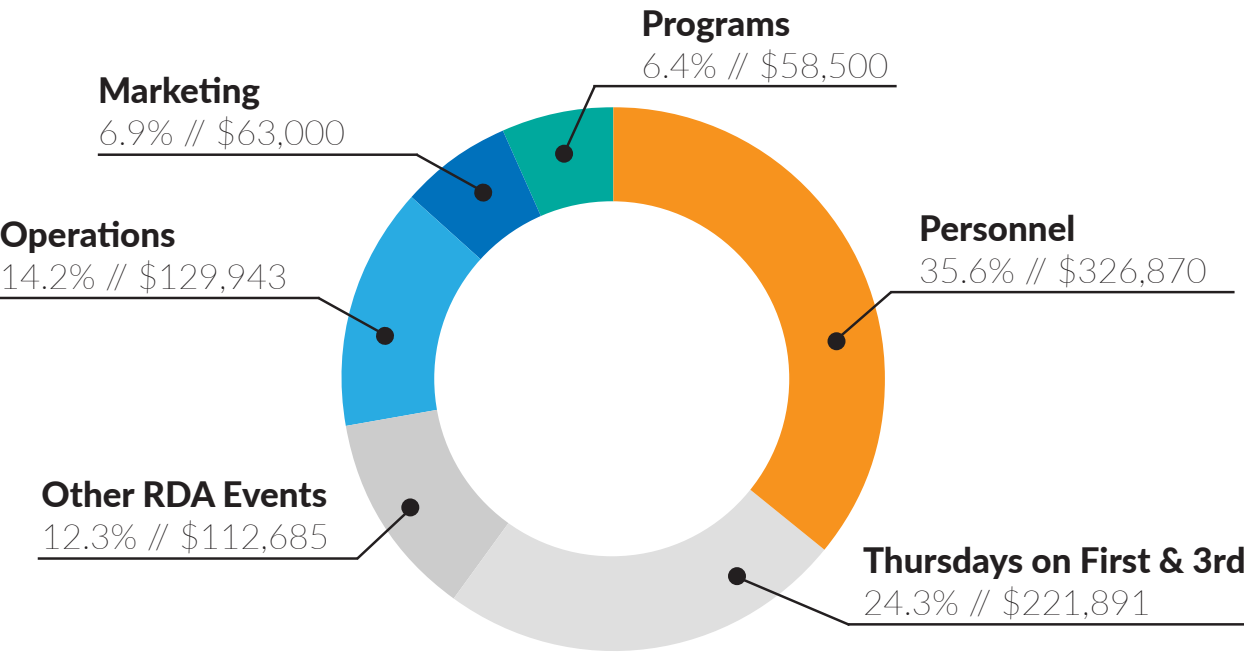
There are five main funding sources for the 2019 budget: a contribution from the Mayo Clinic; a contribution from the City of Rochester; the Special Service District (SSD) Tax; revenues from Thursdays on First & 3rd; and revenues from other RDA events.



2019 PROJECTED EXPENSES

Total Projected Expenses \$912,889

There are six main sources of expenses for the 2019 budget: Thursdays on First & 3rd; general marketing; personnel; events; operations; and programs.



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH EVENTS

2018 EVENTS

Popcorn Day
January 19

SocialICE
February 8, 9, & 10

Ladies Night Out
March 8

Thursdays on First & 3rd
June 7 - August 30

Sidewalk Sale
July 16 - 22

Movies in the Park
June 16, July 21,
August 18, &
September 15

Dogs Downtown
August 4

Fall Fest
October 6

Here Comes Santa Claus
November 23

Small Business Saturday
November 24

2018 EVENT DATA

27
Event Days

303,991
Event attendees throughout
the course of 2018

\$10,015,653
Estimated economic impact

2,598
Survey responses collected

305
Participating businesses

64
Partners

\$31,660
Estimated value in
earned media



**“This is one of the BEST, minimal
expense activities I can get all of my
teenagers to do and get them to spend
time doing it with me.”**
- *Movies in the Park Survey Response*





ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PROGRAMMING

2018 PROGRAMS

With over 215 days of activation and 12 partners, we were able to reach over 130K people throughout the community.

Bookworm Walk
May to August

Social Steps
Select Fridays,
June - August

Games on the Grass
June - October

Heads Up! Rochester
September 10 - 14

2018 START-UP GRANTS

\$10,000 in total grant dollars were distributed to the events below, as they held their first-time events in Downtown Rochester.

1st Annual Rochester Math Festival
March 14

Paint Off
May 12

Us Too
May 15

Drums, Please!
September 24

2018 FACADE GRANTS

From 2010 to 2018, over \$2.9 million in grant dollars have been distributed to Downtown businesses.

Dison's Center
214 N. Broadway

Stebbins Building
220 1st Ave SW

Shops at University Square
111 South Broadway Ave



“And there, in the dark, surrounded by the energy of the music, I was overtaken by tears and love for our city and heart-filling gratitude that I get to be a part of it.”

– Expert from Post Bulletin Article, “A Monday Night at Mayo Inspires Gratitude”
by Jennifer Koski about “Drums, Please!” Event

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH STORIES

#MYDOWNTOWNROCHMN

The Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) announced a new campaign called #MyDowntownRochMN. The campaign featured interviews with a variety of community members and business owners that shared all the things they love about Downtown Rochester, Minnesota. The goal of the campaign was to share an authentic voice, while showcasing our many Downtown businesses.

Dates May - December

Marketing Mediums

RDA E-Newsletter
RDA Website
Peace Plaza Banners
Skyway Digital Billboard
Digital Billboard
Social Media Advertisements
Print Publications

Results

Throughout the campaign, there were 28 features that mentioned over 225 businesses within the Special Service District. Readers spent an average of two-plus minutes on each feature, well above the national average, and we engaged over 15,000 visitors between the campaign features.

Nicki de Vera Featuring
Canvas & Chardonnay

Amanda Golden Featuring
The 1st Avenue Food Court

Shane Braatz Featuring
Knights Chamber

Ahmed Makkawy Featuring
Think Bank

John & Sandy MacLaughlin
Featuring Blue Sky Dental

Danae Gaio Featuring
Potbelly Sandwich Shop

Lisha Leonard Featuring
Pasquale's Neighborhood
Pizzeria

Amita Patel Featuring
Rochester Trolley Company

Tim Hawkins Featuring
Tangerine by Wildflower

Misun Bormann Featuring
The Mayo Civic Center

Rashid Fehmi Featuring
International Spice & Groceries

Declan & Logan Baldus Featuring
Rochester Downtown Alliance
Events

Sheryl Willms Featuring
Poppi Italian Leather

Sam & Ariel Jensch
Featuring The Tap House





ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH MARKETING

SERVICES CAMPAIGN

The services campaign highlighted the 100-plus service businesses that are located within the Special Service District. This is the third industry-specific campaign for the organization as we aim to showcase many of the great businesses of Downtown.

Budget \$7,000

Dates August - October

Marketing Mediums

- RDA E-Newsletter
- RDA Website
- Peace Plaza Banners
- Skyway Digital Billboard
- Digital Billboard
- 5,000 Printed & 5,000 Mailed Brochures
- Facebook Advertisements

Results

The RDA website saw a 20% increase in visits to service pages from 2017 during the same time period. With some areas of interest reaching up to a 65% increase overall.

The Facebook campaign was one of our most successful mediums, helping us reach over 175,000 people.

RETAIL CAMPAIGN

The retail campaign showcased 60-plus retail businesses located within the Special Service District. This campaign took the place of STYLE for 2018 and promoted shopping local prior to the holiday season. A large portion of the campaign entailed taking photos in each of the retailer's businesses to showcase the great products they have to offer.

Budget up to \$11,000

Dates October - November

Marketing Mediums

- RDA Website
- Digital Billboard
- Ad Match Program
- Social Media Advertisements

Results

We ran social media and digital billboard ads for all interested retail businesses and the results were even better than expected. The social media ads had over 470,000 impressions and average website visits increased by 86% over the same time period in 2017. The digital billboard ads also reached an average of 100,000 people each week during the campaign.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH SOCIAL

Data from November 2017 to November 2018

WEBSITE

DowntownRochesterMN.com

233,562

Visitors

8% increase over 2017
82% were new visitors

592,609

Page Views

2% increase over 2017

29,350

Blog Page Views

314% increase over 2017

Audience

48% of visitors are between
the ages of 25 and 44

61% of visitors identify
as female

57% of visitors live
in Rochester

22% of visitors live in the
Twin Cities

51% of visitors viewed our
website on a mobile device

WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

Weekly Updates for Downtown

8,003

Subscribers

25% increase over 2017

SOCIAL MEDIA



@DowntownRochesterMN

14,166 Followers

25% increase over 2017



@ThursdaysOnFirst

12,501 Followers

9% increase over 2017



@DowntownRochMN

4,053 Followers

10% increase over 2017



@DowntownRochesterMN

3,054 Followers

31% increase over 2017



**"Downtown Rochester, MN gives you
a wide variety of things to do in the
Rochester area all year long - even in
the bitterly cold winter!"**

- Downtown Rochester MN Facebook Review



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

2019 EVENTS

Popcorn Day
January 18

SocialCE
February 7, 8, & 9

Ladies Night Out
March

Thursdays on First & 3rd
June - August

Sidewalk Sale
July 18

Movies in the Park
Select Saturdays
June - September

Dogs Downtown
August 3

Fall Fest
October 5

Here Comes Santa Claus
November 29

2019 MARKETING

See, Stay, & Do Campaign
Spring

Small Business Saturday
November 30

**Holiday Promotions for
Downtown Businesses**
Year-Round

**Marketing Sessions for
Stakeholders**
Stay Tuned

2019 PLACEMAKING

3rd Street Alley Project
Spring

Bookworm Walk
Spring

Games on the Grass
Summer

Interested in partnering
with us on events,
placemaking, or marketing
initiatives?
Reach out. We are always open to
exploring and collaborating!

DOWNTOWN

Rochester, Minnesota

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