

DOWNTOWN

Rochester, Minnesota



Fagan Studios

Rochester Downtown Alliance

2019 Annual Report

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To Our Stakeholders

A letter from our 2019 Board Chair and Executive Director

2019 has been a year of dramatic change for the Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) and one that has positioned this organization for a greater positive impact moving forward. Following a national search for a new executive director, the search committee, in working with a consultant, brought forward a qualified slate of candidates for consideration. With a vision to the future, the Board selected Holly Masek. Holly shares the RDA's vision and brings a breadth of experience that, from day one, has been positively influencing and has been jumpstarting the RDA on a path to grow the vitality and vibrancy of downtown Rochester.

Holly alone, though, cannot fulfill our mission. I speak for the Board in saying that our professional staff is a group of creative, smart, and dedicated people who are working as a team to deliver on the expectations of this organization. Leadership transitions are never easy. The time to find, hire, and onboard a new leader is usually filled with moments, days, and even weeks of ambiguity, but the RDA professional staff stepped up, took on additional responsibilities, and guided us to maintaining our high levels of service and kept our commitments to those we serve. I wish to thank the professional staff for all they do to keep the RDA not just going but flourishing.

Holly: I couldn't agree more. As Jay mentioned, staff transitions can be stressful for an organization but can also provide opportunities to grow together as a team and to bring new perspectives to old concerns. Since March, we've been joined by four new staff members: Katie Adelman as director of content and communications; Monika Kopet as events manger; Lauren Rockwell as administrative coordinator; and me as executive director. Meanwhile, Karli McElroy, senior director of placemaking, celebrated her fifth anniversary with the RDA. I am consistantly impressed by my new colleagues, and I can't wait to see what we accomplish together in the coming years.

In 2019, we saw downtown Rochester changing quickly. Against that backdrop the RDA is doing what it does best: adapting, connecting, and making sure downtown Rochester grows more relevant and interesting every day. Major construction and development have been and will continue to impact our stakeholders and our own programs downtown, as Rochester adds new housing, office, businesses, and public spaces. As an organization, we're hoping to support conversations and to facilitate partnerships between stakeholders, government, and other decision makers downtown. Rochester is undoubtedly changing quickly, but we believe in a future for Rochester that has room for everyone.

Jay: Though 2019 marked a big year of transition for the RDA, I believe 2020 and beyond will be even more exciting. The Board approved a 2020 work plan and budget that will exceed \$1 million for the first time. This effort will be led by new leadership at the Executive Board level. Jeanine Gangeness, the new incoming Board Chair, has compiled the perfect team for what lies ahead. Filled with creative and visionary people, her team is the type to roll up their sleeves, ask challenging questions, put forward exciting new concepts, and are dedicated to downtown Rochester.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Board Chair in 2019, and I have grown as a result from this experience. My thanks to all who have supported me throughout this past year. It would not have been possible with your dedication, ideas, and persistence. My commitment to the RDA and downtown Rochester is stronger than ever, and I am even more excited by what is coming.

Holly: With that, in 2019, we laid the groundwork for a major shift in organizational focus. In 2020, the RDA will launch Rochester's first Clean and Safe Ambassador Program. This type of program, utilized in major cities throughout the country, will bring daily

cleaning, security, and customer service ambassadors to downtown Rochester. This is our opportunity to positively impact Rochester every day. We'll be working closely with partners to ensure this program is rolled out thoughtfully and sustainability.

Personally, I want to thank everyone I've met here for the warm welcome I've received in Rochester. I look forward working with you all in the coming years.

Sincerely,
Jay Hesley and Holly Masek



Jay Hesley
Board Chair
University of Minnesota Rochester



Olive Juice Studios

Holly Masek
Executive Director
Rochester Downtown Alliance

Our Staff



Holly Masek
Executive Director

Before joining the RDA, Holly served as Director of Public Realm for Ashkenazy Acquisition Corp. (AAC), a real estate investment firm, where she managed community engagement, placemaking, and tourism strategies for AAC's Iconic Portfolio, with a focus on the Boston market. Holly has a master's degree in Urban Planning from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design and a bachelor's degree in Human Geography from Boston University.



Karli McElroy
Senior Director of Placemaking


In this role, Karli is responsible for creation and development of innovative and collaborative placemaking projects within Downtown Rochester. She works with partners to help the community envision how we see our downtown spaces differently. Karli also oversees the Start-Up and the Façade Improvement Grant programs. She is managing the implementation of Rochester's first Clean and Safe Ambassador Program.



Katie Adelman
Director of Content and Communications

Although a native of Ortonville (west-central Minnesota), Katie spent her childhood traveling to the Rochester area to visit extended family and considers Rochester a second hometown. She received an associate degree in digital art and design from Rochester Community and Technical College in 2010 and a bachelor's degree in mass media with an emphasis in public relations from Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2014.


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DowntownRochesterMN.com


CONTACT
311 Broadway Ave South, Suite A2
Rochester, MN 55904
507 . 216 . 9882


CONNECT
Facebook: Downtown Rochester, MN
Instagram: @DowntownRochesterMN
Twitter: @DowntownRochMN



Monika Kopet
Events Manager

Monika received her bachelor's degree from Metropolitan State University for Communications/Violence Prevention with a minor in Psychology. She has lived in the Twin Cities her whole life and moved to Rochester to be closer to her fiancé and his daughter. She has volunteered previously at the Minneapolis VA Hospital escorting veterans to their doctor appointments, etc., and she is also a huge animal lover with two dogs she rescued.



Olive Juice Studios

Lauren Rockwell
Administrative Coordinator

Lauren moved to Rochester in 2019 from Seattle, WA. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in film studies from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Prior to joining RDA, Lauren was a program manager for the Employer Engagement and Internal Brand team at Amazon Prime Video in Seattle. She is a lover of film and TV, design, podcasts, trivia, and all living things—especially her miniature dachshund, Honey.

Mission

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

Vision

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

Organizational Values

We're the Downtown Experts

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

Build It Together

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

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.

Be Passionate

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

Have Fun

We have fun with everything we do.

Board of Directors

The RDA Board of Directors sets the strategic direction for and provides oversight to the organization. The 2019 RDA Board of Directors consists of 19 members from 18 unique downtown businesses.



Naura Anderson
Downtown Cultural Initiatives Chair
Castle Community



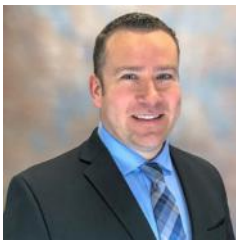
Paul Armon
Armon Architecture



John Beatty
Policy Chair
Dunlap & Seegar P.A.



Jody Chambers
Bremer Bank Wealth Management



Cyle Erie
Kraus-Anderson



Chris Fierst
The Half Barrel Bar & Kitchen



Will Forsman
Café Steam



Jeanine Gangeness PhD
Vice Chair
Winona State University, Rochester



Jay Hesley
Chair
University of Minnesota Rochester



Al Mannino
Past Chair
Mannino Consulting



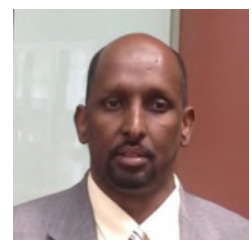
John Murphy
Mayo Clinic



Shruthi Naik
Mayo Clinic/Vyraid Inc.



Mayor Kim Norton
City of Rochester



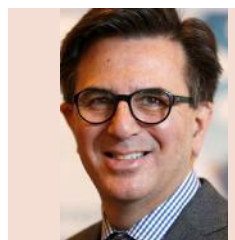
Omar Nur
Somalia Rebuild Organization



Jamie Radke
Secretary/Treasurer
Titan Development



Angie Richards
Board Development Chair
Avra Hospitality



Patrick Seeb
Space and Place Chair
Destination Medcial Center/Economic Development Agency

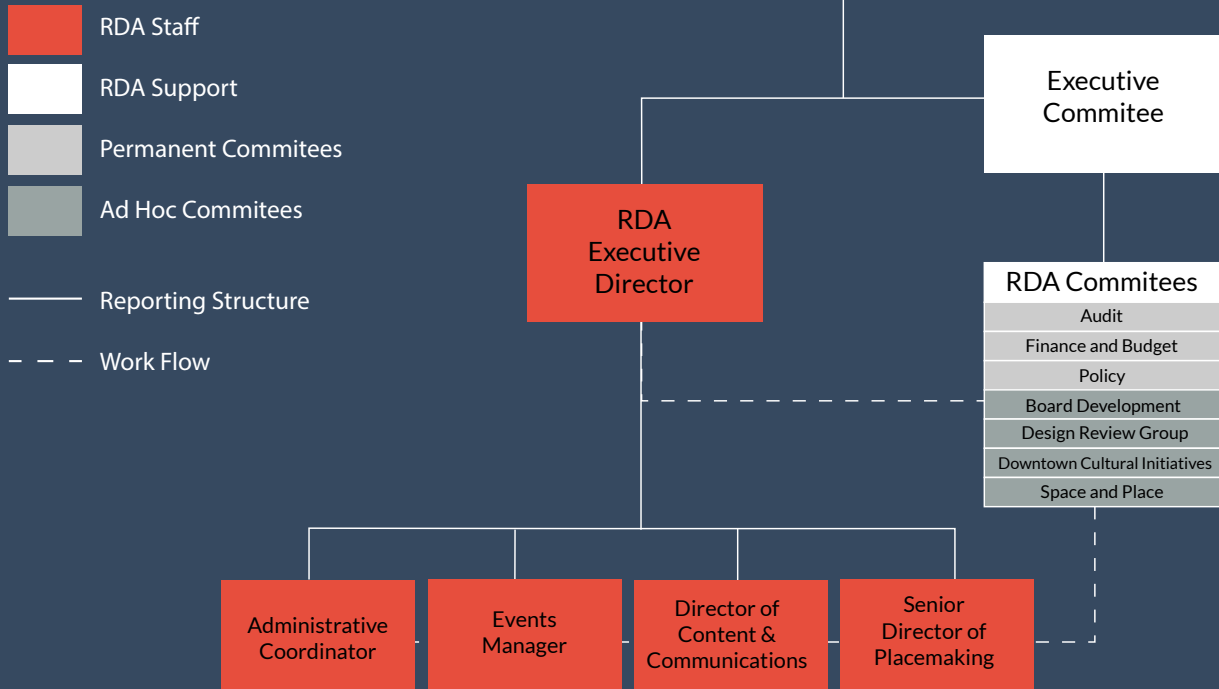


Terry Spaeth
City of Rochester



Joe Ward
Experience Rochester

Rochester Downtown Alliance Organizational Chart



Transitioning Members

The RDA Staff and Board offer a special thank you to Al Maninno and Jamie Radke.

Special thanks to outgoing member Al Mannino, who has been an RDA Board member since 2014. Al has served as Board Vice Chair in 2017, Board Chair in 2018 and Past Chair in 2019. He also chaired the Downtown Cultural Initiatives committee in 2016.

We extend our deepest thanks and sincere gratitude to Jamie Radke, who is stepping down as Board secretary/treasurer, a position he has held since he joined in 2016. Jamie will continue to serve on the RDA Board.

The RDA staff and Board are honored to have worked with you closely and thank you for your dedication and leadership over the years.

“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.”

- 2019 Past Chair Al Mannino

Strategic Priorities

As a special service district, the RDA's main activities champion, support, and promote the businesses, property owners, and cultural assets that compose downtown Rochester. We aim to create a downtown experience that is safe, clean, welcoming, and compelling for a range of audiences. Our work should attract citizens of Rochester, visitors, patients, students, customers, and new investors to the area.



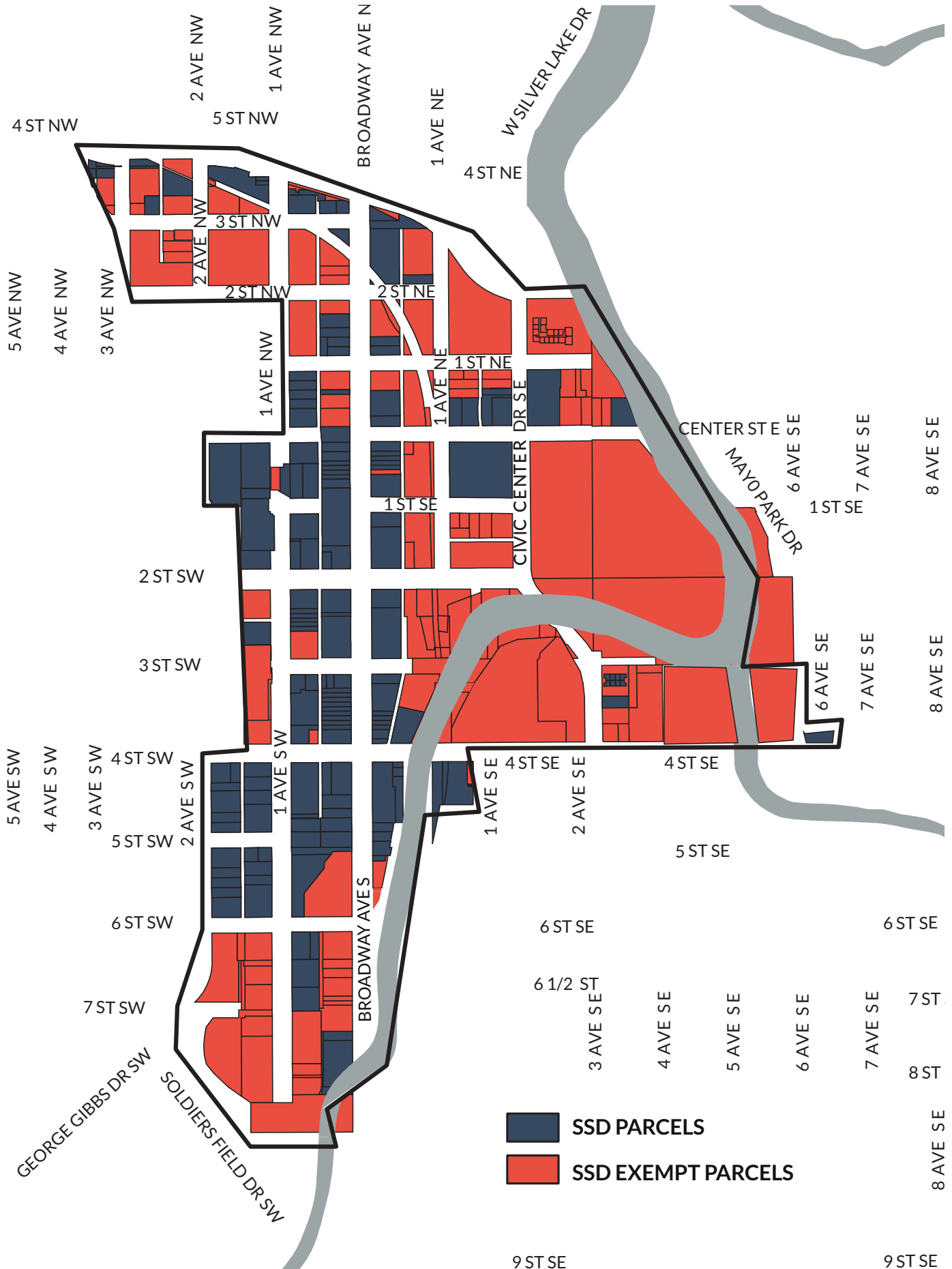
In 2019, the RDA set strategic priorities based on a new area of focus, Organizational Research, Direction, and Development. As a response to the downtown community's evolving needs, the RDA Board and Staff set out to identify the needs and opportunities that fall within the scope of the RDA and outline a long-term vision for the future of the organization. Below are three priorities the RDA set out to develop in 2019, led by a commitment to demonstrating increased value to downtown stakeholders, community residents, visitors, and patients.

Clean Green and Safe: A safe and clean downtown is key to a successful community. In 2019, we explored 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. This work culminated in the issuing of a request for proposal for Clean and Safe vendors at the end of 2019, with an anticipated program start in the spring of 2020.

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 collaborated with downtown businesses and organizations to activate the alley of the 300 block between Broadway and First Avenue.

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 have begun conversations with neighboring property owners to explore potential to expand the SSD boundaries, bringing programming, events, and activations to the greater downtown.

2019 Special Services District Map



Clean and Safe Ambassador Program

In 2019, the RDA began planning for the spring 2020 implementation of a Clean and Safe Ambassador Program in downtown Rochester on behalf of its stakeholders. Clean and Safe Ambassador Programs are a common tool used by special service districts (SSD) and business improvement districts to enhance the districts they serve and can be found in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Duluth, along with numerous other districts in cities across the United States.

A Clean and Safe Ambassador Program will provide cleaning, hospitality, and safety services to the 44-block downtown Rochester SSD currently managed by the RDA.

Why Here in Rochester?

By adopting a Clean and Safe Ambassador Program, we can help downtown Rochester address many small issues that add up to an overall feeling of neglect, insecurity, and disinvestment. A few of the signs of neglect observed by stakeholders, RDA staff, and vendors bidding on this project included stains and spills, chipped paint on trash cans and benches, overflowing trash cans, and weeds in sidewalks.

This program would extend beyond enhanced cleaning services. Ambassadors also regularly check-in with local businesses to provide information about downtown news and events, and are trained on safety, hospitality, business, and livability issues. Ambassadors serve as “eyes on the street” and work closely with local police to report safety concerns. They can become first points of contact

for connecting people experiencing homelessness to social service providers. Some Clean and Safe Ambassador Programs also serve as workforce bridge programs.



Clean and Safe Ambassador Program 2019 Launch Schedule

Action Item	Completion Date
Clean and Safe Ambassador Program vendor Request for Proposals (RFP) distributed.	November 11, 2019
Clean and Safe Ambassador Program proposals due.	December 11, 2019
RDA Space and Place Committee reviewed and approved RFP evaluation criteria for RDA Board of Directors.	December 16, 2019
RDA Board of Directors reviewed RFP evaluation criteria recommendations and empowered Executive Committee to select Clean and Safe Ambassador Program vendor.	December 18, 2019
RDA staff called references for Clean and Safe Ambassador Program vendors and used approved evaluation criteria to review and score proposals.	December 18, 2019 – January 5, 2020



Check out the Proposed Clean and Safe Ambassador Program Launch Schedule for 2020 on page 22

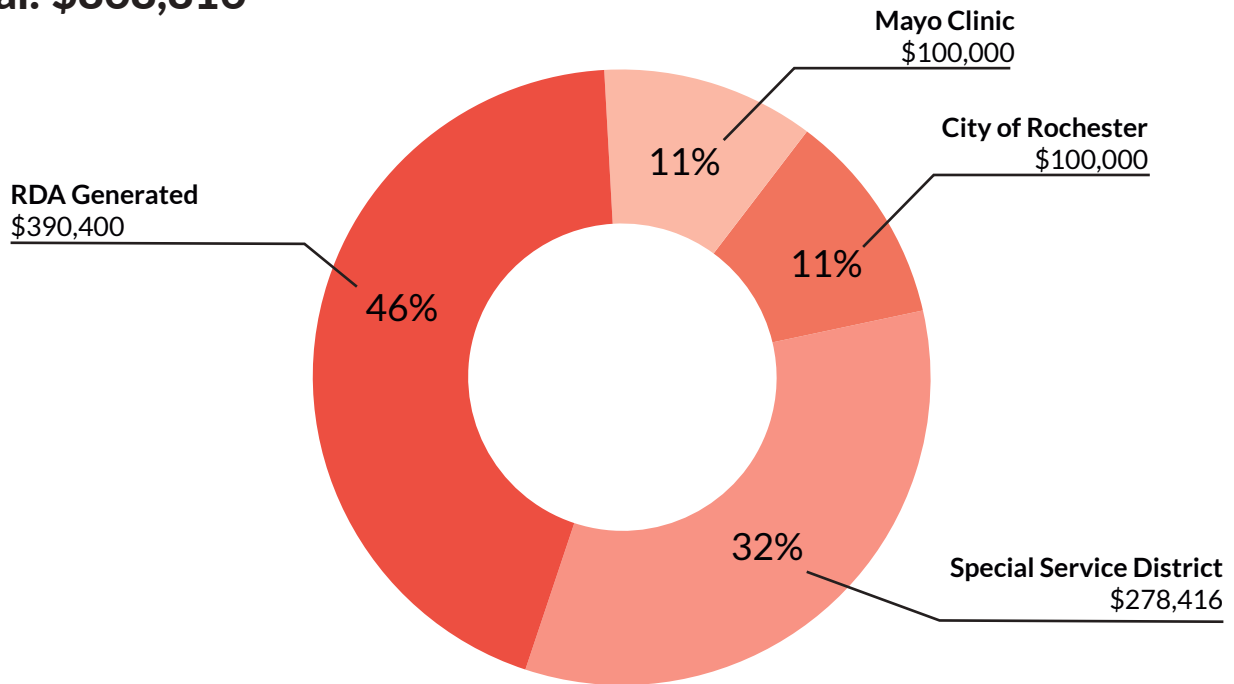


Interested in learning more?
 Contact RDA Senior Director of Placemaking Karli McElroy at 507-216-9882 or email kmcelroy@rdowntownalliance.com for details.

Financial Highlights

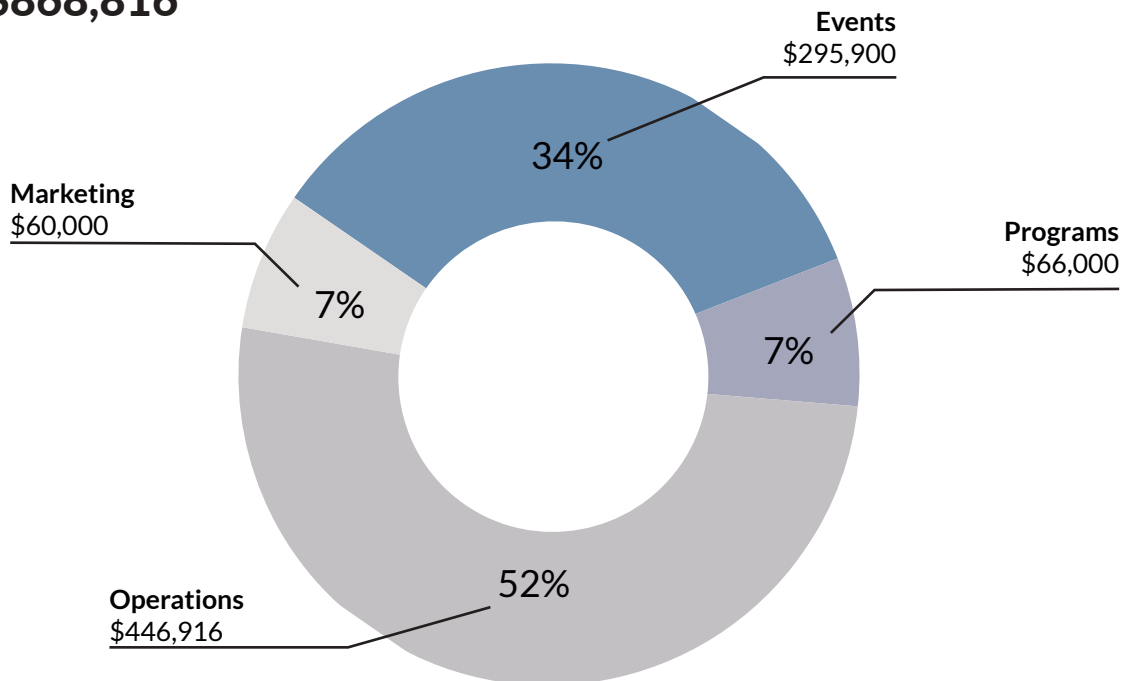
2018 Revenues

Total: \$868,816



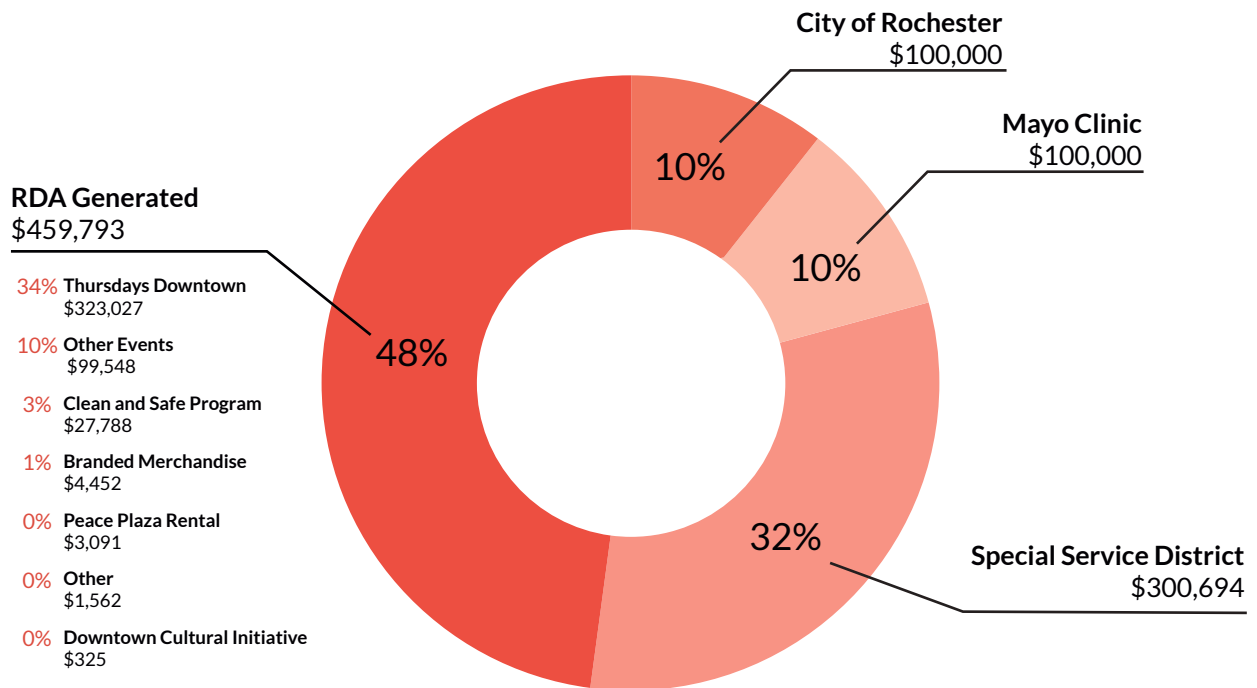
2018 Expenses

Total: \$868,816



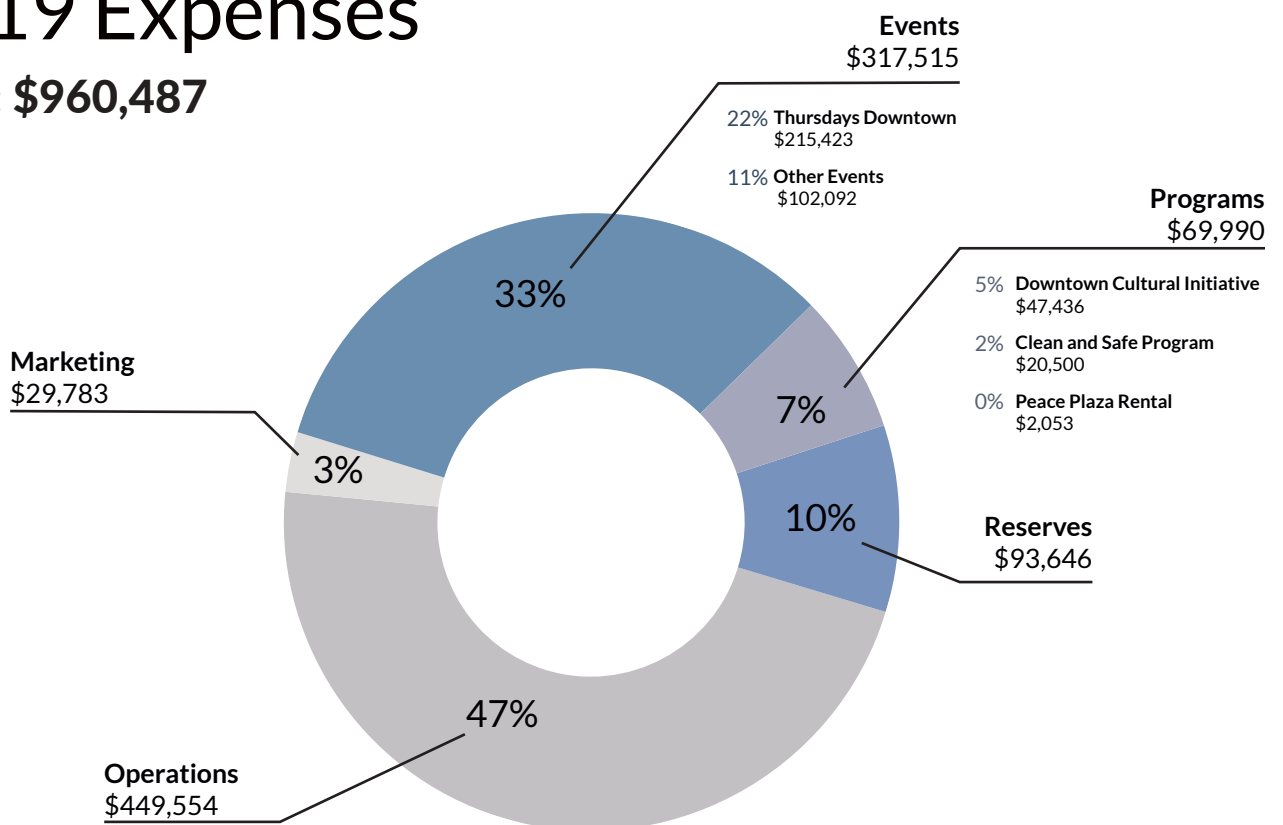
2019 Revenues

Total: \$960,487



2019 Expenses

Total: \$960,487



Events

The RDA has grown over 14 years on the strength of its events. The events produced by our creative staff, Board members, and partners have become beloved Rochester traditions and popular highlights for our community.



SocialICE
February 7,8,9



Ladies Night Out
March 7



Thursdays Downtown
June - August



Movies in the Park
June - September



Sidewalk Sale
July 18



Dogs Downtown
August 3



Fall Fest
October 5



Here Comes Santa Claus
November 29



Small Business Saturday
November 30

2019 Events by the Numbers



282,175

Event attendees throughout 2019



\$10+ Million

Estimated economic impact



277 Participating businesses



31 Million

Estimated earned media reach



71 Partners



3 Million

Estimated social media reach



2,623

Survey responses collected



Façade Improvement Grants

The City of Rochester and the RDA recognize the importance of a high-quality retail and business environment to the continued success of downtown Rochester.

72
 projects completed
 since program
 implementation

The Façade Improvement Grant Program is intended to help encourage investment and bring facades of business properties in downtown Rochester more in tune with Urban Village Design guidelines. Since its beginning in 2010, the program has been offered as an incentive to downtown property owners.

\$800K+
 grant funding
 provided to downtown
 businesses



The Parker BEFORE



The Parker AFTER

\$3.1M+
 invested into our down-
 town by business and
 property owners

2019 Façade Grant Projects

Business	Grant
Castle Community	\$9,398.00
318 Commons	\$11,480.00
Half Barrel	\$11,229.80
MOKA	\$10,279.50
InncubatorEdu	\$22,000.00
Fiza Halal Grocery	\$22,000.00



3rd Street Alley Project

Activating and beautifying underutilized public spaces like alleys integrates exciting and healthy public spaces into our existing urban environments. It also tends to increase the perception of safety and reduce unwanted behaviors in those areas.



Rosei Skipper and Leah Bee

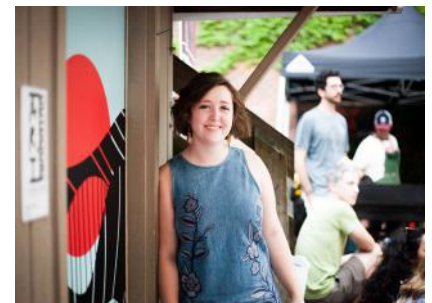
Art Outdoors and Organically Yours

Since 2018, the RDA began working on a new project that aimed to re-purpose the 3rd Street Alley (300 block between 3rd and 4th Streets Southwest) in downtown Rochester by integrating art and design installations into the space. In 2019, these efforts came to fruition, with the installation of artist-submitted works on alley doors—the Art Outdoors program—and the Organically Yours mural, a collaboration between two local artists, Leah Bee and Liz Forsman.



3rd Street Alley Block Party in the Cove

On June 29, Café Steam and Canvas & Chardonnay, with support from the RDA, hosted a 3rd Street Alley block party in The Cove (behind Café Steam and Canvas & Chardonnay). All ages enjoyed the new collaborative, artistic space with interactive murals, live music, an art market, food, wine, and beer.



Corrie Strommen

Marketing

Through website, social media, newsletters, paid and earned media, business-forward events, sponsorship opportunities, and strategic collaborations, the RDA promotes downtown Rochester’s businesses and assets. Annually, the RDA focuses on specific campaigns to highlight the unique offerings of downtown.

See, Stay, Do Campaign




Dates: April through May

The final installment of the RDA’s industry-specific campaigns, the See, Stay, Do campaign featured all the things to see and do in downtown Rochester with the goal of attracting new visitors and residents to downtown. A series of blogs were written and posted on social media.

Marketing Mediums

- RDA e-newsletter features
- Banners/signage placed downtown
- Printed brochures
- Instagram posts
- Blog posts on website
- Facebook posts

Highlights

-  Blog pageviews **4,939**
-  Average time spent on blog page **1:19**
-  Facebook Posts’ Reach **79,692**

Sidewalk Sale

Dates: July 15-21

23 Participating Stores

Our goal was to bring people to downtown Rochester to shop many of our unique, local businesses for the annual Sidewalk Sale event.

Marketing Mediums

- RDA e-newsletter features
- Facebook ads
- Radio ads
- Facebook posts
- Instagram posts
- Blog posts on website

Highlights

-  **15,413** Facebook ad impressions
-  **6th** most-viewed webpage on RDA website while Facebook ad ran
-  **60%** of participating stores experienced an increase in business compared to 2018



Small Business Saturday

Date: November 30


18 Participating Stores

Created by American Express in 2010, Small Business Saturday encourages holiday shoppers to patronize small and locally owned businesses.

Marketing Mediums

- Radio ads
- Website ads on ABC 6 News – KAAL TV
- Half-page ad in Rochester Magazine
- In-kind ad in Shop Rochester Magazine
- RDA e-newsletter features
- Blog posts on website
- Banners/signage placed downtown
- Social media posts

Highlights

 **6th** most-viewed webpage on RDA website during campaign

- 5 Days of Giveaways Facebook Campaign
In promoting Shop Small prior to Small Business Saturday, the RDA celebrated its local stores by giving away \$250 in downtown gift cards in a 5 Days of Giveaways campaign. Each day from November 18 to November 22, we posted a question to our Downtown Rochester, Minnesota Facebook page for followers to engage with. Two winners were randomly drawn each day to receive a \$25 gift card to a downtown business.

 Facebook Posts' Reach **19,525**

 Engagements **851**

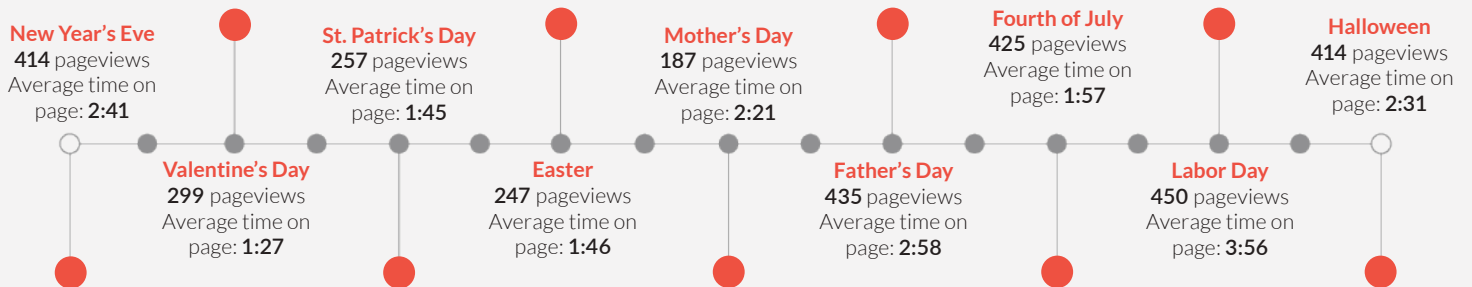
 Clicks **1,608**



Communications

As part of the RDA's 2019 strategic priorities, one area of focus was the marketing and promotion of downtown Rochester, furthering the reach and depth of engagement with the local community and beyond. One action to achieve this goal was to better promote experiences available in and awareness of downtown through blogs and social media.

Holiday Blog Statistics



Summer of Purple Campaign

In collaboration with Riverside Concerts, the RDA promoted A Summer of Purple campaign leading up to Prince's former band *The Revolution's* Riverside Concerts performance in August. This campaign bolstered our overall strategic priority to better promote downtown.

739 pageviews Average time spent on page: 2: 23

Social




16,254 Likes
@DowntownRochesterMN
15% Increase from 2018

13,562 Likes
@ThursdaysDowntown
8% Increase from 2018

Website

Data from January 1 to December 11, 2019



 **4,376 followers**
@DowntownRochMN
8% Increase from 2018

 **4,653 followers**
@DowntownRochMN
52% Increase from 2018

 **8,155 Subscribers**
Downtown Rochester, MN E-Newsletter

Planning for the Future

Our 2020 Vision: Stability and Evolution

2020 Priorities



Organizational Sustainability



Provision of Services



Event and Program Evolution

With the many changes brought forth in 2020, the RDA has identified organizational stability as a top priority for 2020. The RDA will prioritize strengthening our foundation while continuing to represent the best interests of its most direct stakeholders, including SSD members and downtown businesses, as well as

Rochester residents, students, downtown employees, business owners, property owners, patients, and visitors.

Organizational Sustainability: The RDA expects to grow its budget by 50 - 70% in 2020. As the organization grows, its internal systems must be professionalized and streamlined to support it. Goals under this priority include operational efficiency and strategic development for funding and district growth.

Provision of Daily Downtown Services: Over its 14 year history, the RDA has grown on the success of its events. In more recent years, the organization has

explored offering more frequent or long-term services to increase its impact downtown, including weekly Games on the Grass series, the Red Ball Project, and alley activations. In 2020, with the support of major organizational and funding partners, the RDA intends to launch a Clean and Safe Ambassador Program for the City of Rochester. Ambassadors will ideally provide cleaning, safety, and hospitality services 365 days per year and will be able to support additional programs throughout the district.

Event and Programming Evolution: While major events like Thursdays Downtown and SocialICE continue to grow, others such as Style on the Plaza, have been sunsetted. In 2020, the RDA will focus on improving our most successful events, adapting our event footprints to construction as needed, and attempting new annual, weekly, and monthly programs. In all events we will be focusing on public safety, staff efficiency, and sponsorship development.

2020 Proposed Clean and Safe Ambassador Program Launch Schedule

Action Item	Completion Date
Clean and Safe Ambassador Program vendor selection.	January 6, 2020
RDA staff and selected vendor to work with City of Rochester on establishment of differentiation of duties and deployment plan.	January - February 2020
Clean and Safe Ambassador Program contract preparation, review, and confirmation.	January - February 2020
Hiring of Clean and Safe Ambassador Program staff.	March 2020
Clean and Safe Ambassador Program launch.	April 2020
Cleaning and safety data for downtown Rochester collected and distributed to operational partners to continuously improve services.	Ongoing (daily collection of data with monthly, quarterly, and annual reports)

2020 EVENTS CALENDAR

SocialICE

February 6, 7, & 8

SocialICE FAM JAM

February 8

Ladies Night Out

March 26

Thursdays Downtown

Every Thursday
June 4 - August 27

Movies in the Park

June 13 & 27, July 11 & 25,
August 8 & 22

Sidewalk Sale

July 15-19

Dogs Downtown

September 19

Harvest Festival

(formally Fall Fest)
October 3

Here Comes Santa Claus

November 28

Small Business Saturday

November 28

**Interested in partnering with us on events,
placemaking, or marketing initiatives?**

We are always open to exploring new ideas and collaborating! Contact RDA Executive Director Holly Masek at 507-216-9882 or email at hmasek@rdowntownalliance.com or for details.

Fagan Studios



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Rochester, Minnesota

Rochester Downtown Alliance
311 South Broadway Ave, Suite A2
Rochester, MN 55904

507-216-9882
DowntownRochesterMN.com