Uptown Grand Rapids
Year to Date Snapshot

Below is a list of projects and programs that have been successfully accomplished since our last annual retreat on September 16, 2020.

Business Development Focus

- Business Association - MOU, funding ($2,400 each) and continued support
- Contracted first-ever Project Coordinator to support business associations (Benson)
- Hosted virtual small business trainings
  - What is Uptown
  - What is a Business Association
  - Initiate Platform
  - Shop Hop Kick-off
- Internal business newsletter (22)
- Secured Initiate Platform (MEDC) for all Uptown businesses
- Match on Main grant (in process)
- Responsive to business needs and inquiries as needed

Looking Ahead
- Property inventory/development opportunities
- District-wide market study
- Broadening business recruitment
- DE&I small business study with Earl James
- Continued business association development and support
  - Board onboarding and training program
  - Recruitment and retention

Marketing Focus

- Successful Shop Hop 2020
  - Introduced “Season of” and three event dates to be sensitive to public health and dispersing crowds
  - Added temporary window murals
  - Traveling entertainment
  - Increased media coverage/spends
  - Did not contract shuttles
  - Hired event contractors
- Renewed Marketing and Communications Specialist contract - Dana Kroll
- Maintain and update social media channels
- Sponsored neighborhood events (4) and D,E,& I training (2)
- Eastown.com redirected to Uptowngr.com
- Support businesses through #UptownWorks campaign
- Developed event specialist position (on hold)
Looking Ahead
  ○ Continued marketing administration
  ○ Uptown as a destination marketing campaign
  ○ Continued development of event support/programming

Design Focus

● Approved three (1) Facade Design Services
● Approved one (4) Facade Improvement Program
● Completed mural program and expanded public art program
● Installed 15 new trash receptacles throughout the district in response to last year’s inventory
● Contracted new district maintenance, Block by Block Ambassadors, in partnership with DGRI
  ○ 109 business contacts
  ○ 68 biohazard cleanups
  ○ 2381 trash bags removed (~ 48 tons)
  ○ 7 suspicious activities reported
  ○ 30 mobility assists
  ○ 2151 pieces of graffiti removed
  ○ 57 scooters relocated
  ○ Obtained one vehicle to support ambassador program
● Maintained district planting beds and tree wells
● Planted 50 additional street trees
● Worked with City’s CPTED specialist to inventory Eastown
● Conducted business association survey of desired areas of support
  ○ Contracting district-wide holiday decorations based on survey results

Looking Ahead
  ○ Continued streetscape maintenance and beautification
  ○ Actively Support Alternate Transit Solutions in the Neighborhood
  ○ Improve Pedestrian Experience
  ○ Create a Right of Way Improvement Plan

Organizational

● Successfully survived Executive Director family leave
● Created comprehensive Priority Plan and successful 2021-2022 budget adoption
● Contracted DE&I Consultant Earl James
  ○ Completed 4 board trainings
  ○ 1 book club
  ○ adopted consent affirmation
● Applied for 501c3 and adopted new articles of incorporation
● Navigating the BID/BIZ discussion
● Increased organizational support of Neighborhood Associations

Looking Ahead
  ○ Navigating the BID/BIZ way forward
  ○ Convene Neighborhood leaders to develop support plan
  ○ Fund development and staffing plan