

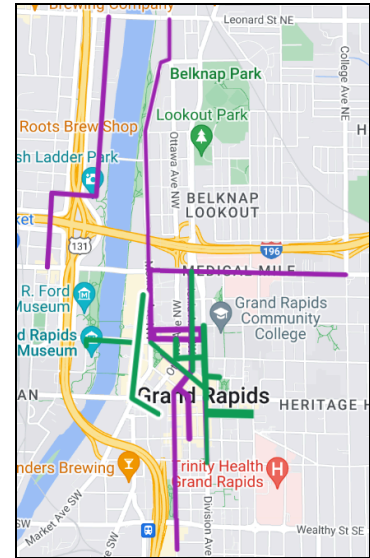
## Spring 2023 Safety Report – Downtown Neighbor Network

The [Downtown Neighbor Network](#) (DNN) seeks to cultivate a community of neighbors who are connected, informed and empowered to continually improve the Downtown living experience.

The DNN wants to share with you findings from recent block audits of Downtown Grand Rapids. Neighbors conducted audits March - May 2023 to help establish a baseline for public safety in the area, focusing on the built infrastructure, cleanliness, and community presence.

***Neighbors define a safe neighborhood as one that is well-maintained, well-lit, and cared for.***

Neighbors hope to use block audits as a way for people to take pride in their community and help address issues quickly for everyone.

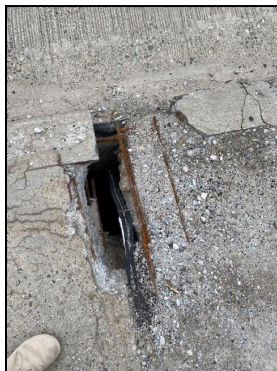


### Key Takeaways From Our Block Audits

**Accessibility** continues to be an issue in the Downtown neighborhood. With all of the rain this spring, many potholes were filled with puddles and difficult to traverse, whether able-bodied or not. Another alarm was the size of the hole in the Pearl St. Bridge, where a neighbor could see the river beneath her feet!

When brought to the attention of the City, neighbors were informed that this hole will be filled this summer. This is not a timely response to such a safety hazard.

Downtown Neighbors are partnering with Disability Advocates of Kent County to continue to bring awareness and accessibility to the forefront of needs in city infrastructure projects.



**Lighting:** Lighting has become a main concern of Downtown neighbors as more people spend time outside in warmer weather. Many alcoves of buildings didn't have noticeable lighting outside of business hour and neighbors noticed a lack of lighting on side streets, away from typical tourist locations.

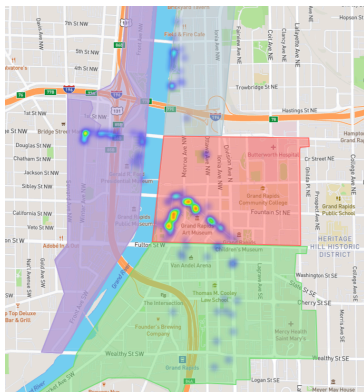
- *Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will facilitate a lighting audit to align appropriate lighting to the daily needs and experiences of neighbors.*

**Cleanliness:** Neighbors noted that Downtown was generally clean. The exception was the skywalk. One neighbor commented that the skywalk was “littered with debris and did not portray the City well” to tourists our neighbors using it daily to get places. Trashcans were noticed as prevalent, except along Monroe Ave, where neighbors felt more could be added.

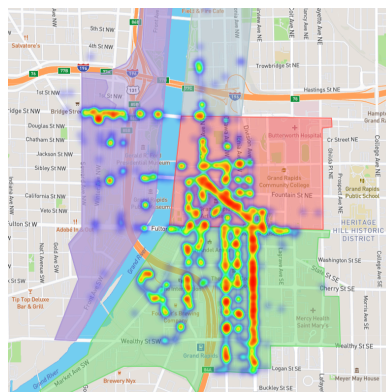
**Presence:** Police were noticed more often than Ambassadors in our Spring audits and in general, the number of people on the streets increased with warmer weather. A total of 8 vacant buildings were observed. The Keeler building on Division Ave. N. seems to be the largest “hole” in the community fabric that neighbors would like to see better utilized.

Additional Ambassador data was collected to show the team’s presence in the neighborhood addressing cleanliness, resident needs and personal interactions with businesses, visitors and neighbors. Ambassador presence in Heartside has increased since our winter 2023 report. Neighbors see value in this team and thank them for their work!

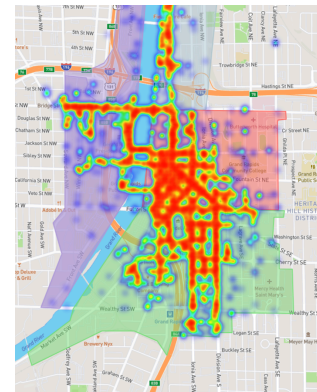
### Neighbor Engagement



### Trash Collection



### Pedestrian Assists



## Conclusion

The Downtown Grand Rapids neighborhood continues to be an active area where many people choose to walk to get to daily tasks. However, the neighborhood could benefit from improvements in accessibility and lighting to facilitate this chosen mode of transit.

This report emphasizes the need for community-driven efforts to improve public safety in the neighborhood. By working together, the community can make Downtown Grand Rapids a safer and more enjoyable place to live to increase traffic to- and from- daily activities.

This is the second quarterly report of the Neighborhood Block Audit and we still encourage more neighbors to participate and share their experience to make sure our community remains safe for everyone who uses public space.

If you have any feedback about areas of the neighborhood that you traverse, we would love to hear it. Please complete a [block audit form](#) to let us know.