

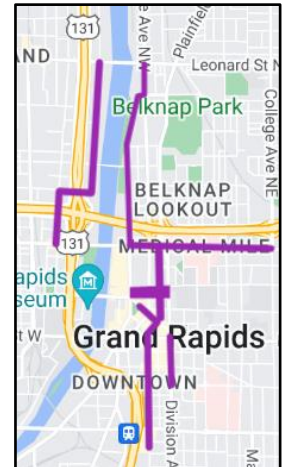
Winter 2023 Safety Report – Downtown Neighbor Network

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 these audits 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.

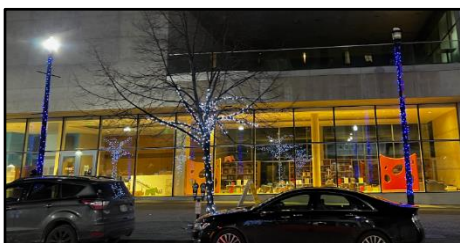
Neighbors hope to use block audits as a way for people to take pride in their community and help address issues quickly for everyone.



Key Takeaways From Our Block Audits

Accessibility: Two-thirds of our observations noted that sidewalks were difficult to navigate due to cracks, missing pieces, or uncleared snow. Ionia Ave. in the blocks both south and north of Fulton St. were most noticeably in need. *(See photos: patched sidewalks that are uneven or have cracks and holes; snow cover making sidewalks inaccessible.)*

- *We believe that everyone should be able to navigate the sidewalks, regardless of building occupancy, and will advocate for usable sidewalks, year-round.*



Lighting: Many alcoves of buildings didn't have noticeable lighting outside of business hours, and a small number of lights were burnt out or dim on Monroe Center. *(See photo: difference between right and left lights.)*

- *We will advocate for better lighting for pedestrians in our neighborhood.*



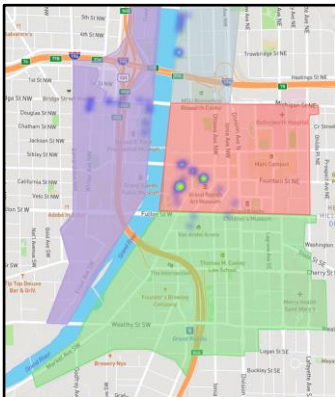
Cleanliness: We were happy to find that 83% of the area we observed was clean, and all neighbors noted that there were plenty of usable trashcans. We did notice some graffiti in one block. But it was the only instance we observed, and it was on private property. *(Photos from Monroe Center and Division Ave.)*



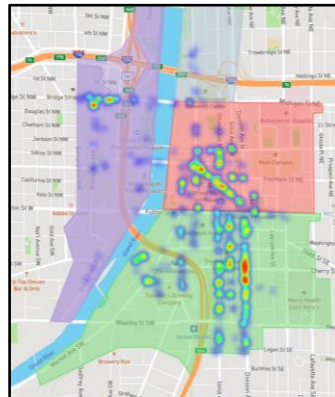
Presence: We didn't note any police presence during our block audits, but we did see Ambassadors in about half of our audits. We also noticed other people during our walks, but the number varied greatly depending on the time of day and location. We saw a total of 15 storefront vacancies, with the most being in Division Ave S. *(Photo from Ionia Ave S.)*

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. Neighbors see value in this team and thank them for their work!

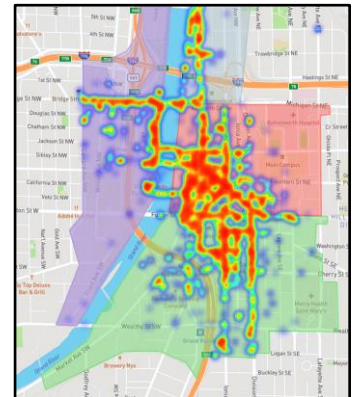
Neighbor Engagement



Trash Collection



Pedestrian Assists



Conclusion

The Downtown Grand Rapids neighborhood has strengths in cleanliness, neighborliness, and the presence of Ambassadors. However, the neighborhood could benefit from improvements in accessibility and lighting. 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.

We hope that this report serves as a helpful starting point for public safety discussions in Downtown Grand Rapids. We're still in the data collection phase, but we are committed to using this information to improve the reality and perception of safety in our neighborhood.

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.