



Downtown Improvement District

2020 Annual Report

Mpls Downtown Improvement District & Vibrant and Safe Downtown



Dear Downtown Stakeholder,

Writing this message brings reflections on the difficulties we faced as a community over the past year. We know COVID-19, safety concerns, and social unrest all had tremendous impacts and continue to pose challenges. It truly was a year like no other. But despite all that 2020 threw at us, we also see reasons for great optimism—coupled with realism—as we look ahead.

The DID adjusted to the needs of our downtown community, and remained on the job throughout the year, as you'll read in this annual report. Our Ambassadors masked up and stayed focused on their day-to-day work. We provided mask and handwashing services. We increased safety communication and enhanced outreach partnerships. And we moved activations online that not only supported members of our community but also gave back to social justice organizations.

We learned a lot in 2020, all while strengthening partnerships and relationships that will help serve our downtown in the weeks, months and years ahead. Looking down the road, we launched our public safety plan with five key areas of focus: communications and collaborations, security presence and response, livability outreach and street engagement, advocacy for a safer downtown, and activation, vibrancy and crime prevention. We continue to nurture downtown's reanimation and are ready to assist as needed in helping employees and visitors return to our streets. We will help our community—both through preparations and communication—during the trials related to the death of George Floyd. And we will continue our focus on pilots and initiatives that help our downtown become greener, cleaner, safer and more vibrant.

We move forward as I (Mike) begin my first year as board chair. There is no question we have our work cut out for us. But Steve and I, and our staff and board colleagues, continue to believe in the strength of downtown Minneapolis thanks to the relationships, collaborations and commitments you continue to make toward our city's vitality. Together, we will help keep downtown extraordinary.

Thank you for your continued commitment and belief in our downtown. We know hard work by all of us lies ahead, but that work has already begun and in the end will help us become stronger as a community. We appreciate all you do and are ready to continue our work toward a vibrant downtown.

Respectfully Yours,



Mike Ryan
Chair, Board of Directors
President of the North Region
Ryan Companies



Steve Cramer
President & CEO
mpls downtown council
Mpls Downtown Improvement District

Clean

Bags of trash removed in 2020:
20,454

Total since inception:
357,301

Graffiti tags removed in 2020:
5,816

Total since inception:
60,275



Green

Annuals, Perennials planted in 2020:

11,184

Total since inception:
181,604

Weeds removed (block faces) in 2020:
1,523

Total since inception:
15,860



Safe

Pedestrians assisted in 2020:
33,478

Total since inception:
1,095,479



More

Recycling bags filled in 2020:
2,547

Total since inception:
27,246



"I can't thank DID enough for the partnership during this uncertain and challenging year. You have a wonderful staff doing incredible work for Downtown."

— Downtown Business Leader

Downtown Minneapolis Street Festival – More info [Nicollet Activation](#)



Nicollet Activations

DID's activations adjusted to virtual or socially-distant experiences throughout 2020 in an effort to maintain supporting local artists and makers while also providing experiences that can be enjoyed remotely. [OnNicollet.com](https://www.onnicollet.com)



Street Show Gem featuring Lady Midnight

Virtual Street Show

Produced by DID and Hennepin Theatre Trust and curated by The Warming House, Street Show offered 40 virtual performances by local artists streamed from their own locations on Tuesdays and Thursdays from May through October.

Street Show Gem offered eight additional special performances at downtown locations. Overall, Street Show performances received 26,000 views. Each Street Show performance raised donations for a social justice cause of the artist's choosing. DID donated more than \$11,000 toward the social justice causes highlighted during the Street Show season. [StreetShowMpls.org](https://www.streetshowmpls.org)

Street Show Gems:

- Jeremy Messersmith (*The Dayton's Project*) in support of Voices for Racial Justice
- Turn, Turn, Turn (*Brit's Pub*) in support of Juxtaposition Arts
- King Pari (*Le Meridian Chambers*) in support of Street Voices of Change
- Lady Midnight (*Hennepin Theatre Trust*) in support of Kulture Klub Collaborative
- Nur-D (*U.S. Bank Stadium*) in support of zAmya Theater Project
- Dan Rodriguez (*St. Anthony Falls Upper Lock & Dam*) in support of YouthLink
- PaviElle (*IDS Center Crystal Court*) in support of Kulture Klub Collaborative
- Bad Bad Hats (*Target Field*) in support of Juxtaposition Arts

Downtown Minneapolis Street Art Festival

A collaboration between DID and Hennepin Theatre Trust, the Downtown Minneapolis Street Art Fest returned in August and September with two dozen chalk and street art projects visible on Nicollet and Hennepin. Both a virtual experience online and a socially-distant viewing experience in person were available.

[MplsStreetArtFest.com](https://www.mplsstreetartfest.com)

Thank You Front Line Workers Chalk Art

DID commissioned chalk art supporting our front-line and essential workers in March and April. The chalk art, created by Shawn McCann and Lydia Anderson, thanked healthcare, first responders, grocery and retail store attendants, DID Ambassadors, postal workers and more.

Armature Lighting and Speakers On Nicollet

Scheduled lighting and music on Nicollet between 6th and 8th Streets offered entertainment throughout the year.

- MnSpin playlists highlighted local artists' music—much of which was released in 2020 and had not yet been played for a live audience.
- DID partnered with the Minnesota Orchestra to play "Mahler's Symphony No. 7" in August, aligned with the release of their "Mahler's Symphony No. 7" CD.
- Holiday light shows offered music and lighting performances on the Nicollet armature on the half hour during the holiday season.

Virtual Makers Market

The Nicollet Makers Market moved online and offered a way for our community to shop local makers' products virtually. Signs along Nicollet on typical Makers Market dates helped direct people to [NicolletMakersMarket.com](https://www.nicolletmakersmarket.com).

Farmers Market CSA Partnership

DID's partnership with the Minneapolis Farmers Market continued with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) box online orders in September and October. Boxes were available for pick-up outside IDS Center on Nicollet.

Go Tours

Virtual Go Tours helped us connect with downtown Minneapolis in-person or virtually. Four free audio tours (Nicollet Architecture, Nicollet Design, Nicollet Public Art, and Weird Nicollet) are available at [OnNicollet.com/Stories](https://www.onnicollet.com/stories) and offer fun, informative paths through our downtown. Learn about our city, wherever you are.

Holidazzle Yeti at Peavey Plaza

The Holidazzle Yeti made an appearance at Peavey Plaza. The Yeti, a Christopher Lutter-Gardella creation, made its appearance on Nicollet from December 3-13 through a partnership between Holidazzle and DID.

Safety/COVID-19

Handwashing Stations

DID deployed 10 handwashing stations in March, offering high pedestrian corridors downtown a resource to enhance public health. Locations stretched along Hennepin and 1st Avenues, Nicollet, and between 4th and 5th Streets.

Nicollet Pilot Project

The Nicollet Pilot Project launched in August and focused on providing a more visible presence of outreach and security in order to support a feeling of safety for all who spend time on Nicollet between 8th and Grant Streets. In addition to Joint Beats collaboration between the Minneapolis Police Department, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and Metro Transit Police Department, the pilot project included:

- MAD DADS street outreach workers
- DID Safety Ambassadors and Livability Team members
- YouthLink Street Outreach workers
- MPD/DID buyback officers and Police Reserves
- Youth Coordinating Board outreach team

Downtown Virtual Safety Meetings

The DID Safety Communications Center facilitated virtual safety meetings beginning weekly in April and continuing bi-weekly beginning in June. The meetings focused on up-to-date safety and security information including COVID-19 response, First Precinct crime trends, outreach efforts, and DID initiatives.

Connecting our community

The DID Safety Communications Center provided real-time communications to a security-based group downtown, particularly during the unrest in May/June and August. DID Safety Communications Center logged 9,000 hours and over 227,000 radio transmissions in 2020 connecting with Ambassadors, RadioLink, and more.

DID Storage Project

DID launched a free storage project with support from the City of Minneapolis, offering those experiencing homelessness a space to leave their personal belongings during the day. The project led to a more permanent free storage facility set to launch at Ramp B in 2021.

Downtown Minneapolis Cloth Mask Drive

The Downtown Minneapolis Cloth Mask Drive launched in May and collected masks for people staying in emergency shelters or congregate care facilities. To date, the Downtown Minneapolis Cloth Mask Drive has collected more than 8,500 masks. [More info: mplsdid.com/masks](https://mplsdid.com/masks)



Downtown Mpls Cloth Mask Drive



“After losing my face mask on my walk to Target on 9th and Nicollet, a DID Ambassador provided me with a clean mask so I didn’t have to walk all the way back home to get a new one. He was awesome! You guys do a wonderful job keeping the city clean and helping everyone that needs it.”

– Downtown Resident



Ambassadors

DID Ambassadors continued to provide services each day that help make downtown greener, cleaner, safer and more vibrant. Throughout the pandemic, Ambassadors made adjustments to ensure public health protocol—including hours and numbers on the street—but never wavered in their service to our community. They handed out masks, wore their own, and continued to play a big role in helping pedestrians navigate downtown.



Thank You, Ambassadors

Organizations and businesses throughout downtown joined in saying Thank You to our DID Ambassadors, Livability and Safety Communications Center team throughout the year. Companies posted their appreciation on social media, a billboard campaign said thanks, and we said thank you in person at Peavey Plaza in October. No individual Ambassador of the Year was recognized in 2020, as all went above and beyond to serve downtown throughout the past 12 months.

Waving Hello

A large, inflated Ambassador made an appearance on Nicollet near Peavey Plaza (cover image). The Ambassador greeted pedestrians with a wave—and also wore a mask.

Added Cleaning and Public Health

DID Ambassadors added cleaning regimens to high-frequency area touch points during the pandemic. They also handed out masks as a resource to those downtown.

“This morning a DID Ambassador helped me after I had my COVID-19 vaccination at the Convention Center and couldn’t find the parking ramp I had used. It was wonderful to be met and helped by such kind people. I appreciate your organization. It helped my downtown experience immeasurably.”

– Downtown Visitor

Greening

8th Street Project

DID played an active role in 8th Street's reconstruction. DID partnered with the City of Minneapolis and Mississippi Watershed Management Organization on a stormwater management pilot project. All stormwater that falls in the right-of-way on one block of 8th Street is directed toward a series of recessed planters, helping make downtown greener while cleaning the runoff into the Mississippi River.

Hennepin Avenue Project

Major roadwork on Hennepin Avenue is complete between 12th and 7th Streets, offering a fresh new roadway, pedestrian improvements, and dedicated space for biking and scooting. DID played a role in piloting planting areas, bus shelters and surface parking lot fencing that helped inform the project's design. In future years, DID will be maintaining the enhanced lighting, perennial planting, irrigation and fencing along the Hennepin corridor.

DID Service Levels



The District is divided into two service levels: Premium and Standard. These areas were determined based upon the level of pedestrian activity and the resulting need for intensity of service to maintain a consistent standard. These service levels can be modified as need to reflect any land use changes that result in changes to pedestrian activity patterns and intensity.

The Mpls Downtown Improvement District is funded primarily by downtown Minneapolis commercial property owners within the District.

To learn more about the DID or to provide important feedback about our services, please contact us at:

Business Office: 612.338.3807

Ambassador Hotline: 612.332.1111

81 South 9th St. #260,
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Info@MplsDID.com

www.MplsDID.com

Holiday Lighting and Greening

DID helped accentuate the new Nicollet during the holiday season by adding new twinkle lights and winter greening during the winter months. The lighting stretched from the Theater in the Round outside the Minneapolis Central Library to the southern edge of Nicollet.

Greening Lab

DID earned an International Downtown Association (IDA) Downtown Achievement Award of Excellence for Public Space Management and Operations for its Greening Lab program. Throughout the year, Greening Lab implemented several projects focused on growing downtown's street trees, including:

- A tree watering program in partnership with the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association, watering young trees downtown weekly.
- Launching Discovery Kits, a socially distant program. Volunteers were sent citizen science kits that enabled them to gather important information about tree health and soil science.
- A series of videos in partnership with Hennepin County and Green Minneapolis raising awareness about work being done to grow the downtown forest.



**Downtown
Improvement
District**

At DID, we strive to be economically and environmentally sustainable. We have a limited quantity of our printed annual reports available, choosing instead to post our full report in PDF format on our website. If you know someone without access to the web, please direct them to us and we will gladly provide a printed copy.



**Downtown
Improvement
District**

Financials & Governance

The Mpls Downtown Improvement District (DID) is a business-led, 501c6 non-profit that leads and collaborates to create a clean, green, safe and vibrant downtown by convening, developing solutions, activating and continuously improving existing programs.

DID is primarily funded by special service assessments authorized by a City of Minneapolis ordinance. By state statute, only commercial properties are required to pay the DID assessments. However, as all properties benefit from an improved public realm downtown, some non-profit, government and residential properties voluntarily contribute. More than 64 million square feet of Gross Building Area (GBA) are located within the 120 block boundaries of DID. Properties are assessed for directly lineal services based on lineal frontage and for more globally benefitting services based on GBA. Charges are prorated to properties based on location within pedestrian service level areas. This three-part method best reflects the volume of people needing service and the level of services delivered.

Vibrant and Safe Downtown is an organization that brings the public and private sectors together to make the heart of downtown safe and welcoming for those who live, work, and visit here. In December 2004, the downtown business community approached city leadership to ask for efforts to increase downtown safety. As a result, Vibrant and Safe Downtown was formed by the Minneapolis Police Department. In July 2009, Vibrant and Safe Downtown became a subsidiary of the DID. The organization focuses on public safety through leveraging collaborative partnerships, technology, communication resources and strategic initiatives.

The Board of Directors is comprised of downtown property owners, employers, residents and leaders representing key constituencies and areas of expertise. The boards of the DID and the mpls downtown council allow for the same individuals to serve on the boards of both organizations, establishing the DID as a wholly-controlled subsidiary of mdc. DID staff oversee vendors, develop programs, advocate for the public realm, communicate with stakeholders and administer the organization.

Financial Statement

	2020			2021
	City Contract Budget	City Contract Actual	Variance	
Service Charges	\$ 7,295,657	7,295,657	—	\$ 6,912,642
Release from reserves*	—	71,515	71,515	383,000
Total Sources	\$ 7,295,657	\$ 7,295,657	\$ 71,515	\$ 7,295,642
Safe	\$2,328,633	\$2,166,906	\$(161,727)	\$2,382,833
Livability & Outreach	799,550	594,358	(205,192)	620,126
Clean	1,492,140	1,448,540	(43,600)	1,533,827
Green	406,000	346,342	(59,658)	392,000
Maintenance of Public Areas	221,333	189,191	(32,142)	255,750
Snow	261,500	251,799	(9,701)	261,500
Communications	118,647	99,621	(19,026)	115,782
Program Management	1,265,000	1,226,033	(38,967)	1,346,140
Administration	352,854	342,227	(10,627)	337,684
Contingency	50,000	28,086	(21,914)	50,000
Reserves Funded*	—	674,069	674,069	—
Total District Uses	\$ 7,295,657	\$ 7,367,172	\$ 71,515	\$ 7,295,642
Sources in Excess of Uses	—	—	—	—

*Reserves funded are being used in part to reduce future service charges.

The combined 2020 financial activity of the Mpls Downtown Improvement District and Vibrant & Safe Downtown received an unmodified opinion in an audit by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP. To receive a copy of the audited statements please contact Kathryn Reali at 612.338.3807 or kreali@mplsdid.com

2020 Board, Committees & Partners

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Siyad Abdullahi – The Language Banc
Christine Ackerman – Sleep Number
Michelle Basham – YWCA Of Minneapolis
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CenterPoint Energy
Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Hennepin County
Metro Regional Arts Council
Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority
Ramsey County

We have used our best efforts to acknowledge everyone in this report. If you're missing or incorrectly listed, please accept our apologies and let us know so we can correct our error in future publications.

*Members are also part of the Executive Committee