

DOWN TOWN

Rochester, MN

RDA 2022 Annual Report



Mission:

To create, enhance, and promote a downtown experience that is welcoming, fun, and livable.

Sidewalk Sessions
Photo Credit: Corrie Strommen

RDA BOARD CHAIR LETTER

2022 was another year of seemingly constant change for our downtown. The community celebrated the much-anticipated re-dedication of the Peace Plaza and gained more public park-like space with the redesigned 1st Avenue Southwest. It was great to see the community enjoying the new public spaces. Thursdays Downtown was back in its familiar form this year and was very well attended. Also completed this year was the downtown sidewalk enhancement experience project, a much-needed reconstruction of sidewalks along Broadway Avenue.

The Clean and Safe Ambassadors can always be seen around downtown, cleaning, greeting visitors and providing directions or a friendly escort when needed. The City of Rochester and Mayo Clinic have continued their commitment to the Clean and Safe Ambassador Program through dedicated program funding. Downtown stakeholders have helped provide feedback on the program and built relationships with the Ambassadors.

All that the RDA does takes a lot of hard work by a determined staff, and I would like to thank them for all of their efforts in 2022. I also would like to thank the volunteers on the board of the directors and the committees for their commitment to downtown. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank the downtown business owners and their teams for their steadfast commitment to downtown, passion for making our community better, and service to our residents and visitors; you are truly what makes our downtown welcoming, fun, and livable.

Sincerely,
Cyle Erie
Project executive
ISG

RDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LETTER

One of the aspects of downtowns that first drew me to this work is their dynamism. From season to season and year to year a downtown can shift and feel like a whole new place to discover. In 2022 we welcomed 13 new businesses and anticipate several more opening in 2023. The University of Minnesota announced the creation of a new dorm and continues to expand its footprint. Mayo Clinic broke ground on new buildings and our streets became busy with 12 new events. These changes brought optimism and excitement for the future.

But change isn't always easy or comfortable. Some changes taking place in Rochester and across the world will alter how downtowns operate forever. Remote work has drawn employees out of downtowns, reducing daily customer foot traffic and the demand for office buildings. Shifts to telehealth have shortened patient hotel stays. As we all navigate these realities, it is vital to support the long-standing businesses and people who have seen downtown through many changes, alongside celebrating the new additions that will help define downtown's future.

As I write this, RDA is also undergoing change. I will be leaving my position as executive director in early 2023 and the board will begin their search for the organization's next leader. Throughout my pandemic-headlined time at RDA, I have been impressed by adaptability and collaboration of the downtown community as you have adapted to innumerable changes. I leave RDA realistic about the challenges that remain ahead yet confident that RDA will always find new ways to serve the needs of our stakeholder community. Change is a constant, and so is RDA's dedication to supporting downtown Rochester. I know I am leaving you in good hands.

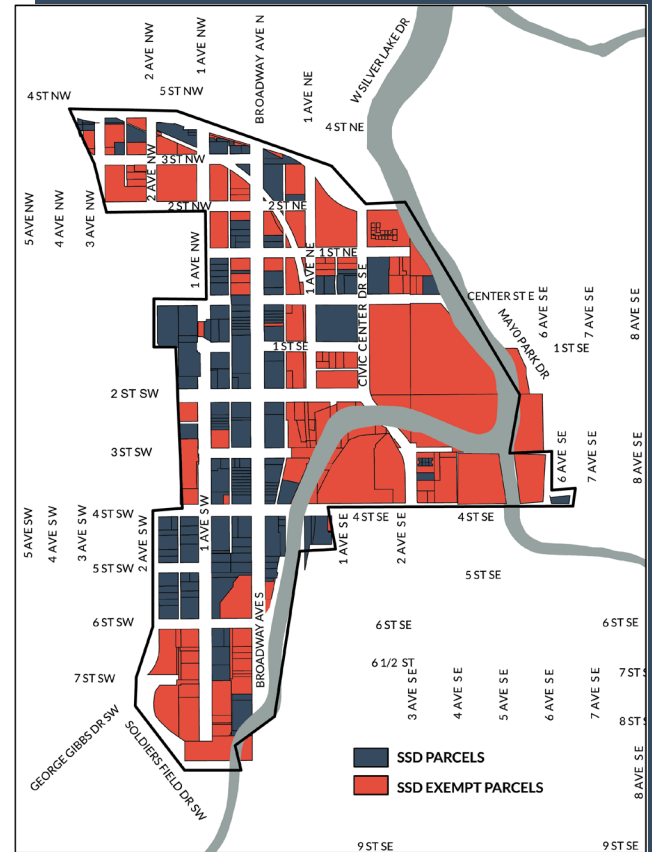
Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Sincerely,
Holly Masek
RDA executive director

RDA SERVICE TO THE SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT (SSD)

The RDA, a 501(c)6 established in 2005, was authorized to enhance the vitality of downtown by improving the physical environment, creation and promotion of special events for the 44 block area defined by the SSD boundaries. Multiple sources of revenue fund the RDA with 20 percent of it coming from SSD levy dollars, and the remaining 80 percent coming from contributions from Mayo Clinic and the City of Rochester, with the largest percentage coming from revenue generated from event and program sponsorships.

The RDA is a service organization providing a broad variety of services and programs designed to increase the economic vitality and improve the quality of life for our residents, visitors, employees, and students. The RDA provides numerous services to the downtown area including the Clean and Safe Ambassadors Program, which provide year round cleaning, hospitality and safety services, technical assistance, grants to organizations, efforts to increase the comfort, accessibility, and vibrancy of our downtown public spaces for residents and visitors. In addition, RDA seeks to strengthen our diverse community through its multi-cultural programming, multi-lingual outreach, and deep commitment to do everything to help make Rochester an inclusive, vibrant and welcoming community.



RDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RDA is governed by a board of directors which includes downtown property owners, businesses, and partners. The board meets monthly and provides financial and strategic oversight to the organization. The board strives to represent the best interests of RDA's stakeholders, which include property owners, businesses, partners, and users.

Executive committee:

- Cyle Erie, ISG, Chair
- Kayla Shurson, Shurson Group, Treasurer and Vice Chair
- Will Forsman, Café Steam, Board Development Chair
- Jeanine Gangeness, Winona State University, Rochester, Activities, Culture, and Engagement Committee Co-Chair
- John Beatty, Dunlap & Seeger, Police Chair
- Shruthi Naik, Vyriad and Mayo Clinic, Past Chair and Activities, Culture, and Engagement Committee Co-Chair
- Bern O'Brien, Alliance Property Management, Clean and Safe Ambassador Program advisor

Directors:

- Paul Armon, Armon Architecture
- Bucky Beeman, Realty Growth Inc.
- Riann Bright, The Maven on Broadway
- Michelle Dobson, U.S. Bank
- Chris Fierst, The Half Barrel Bar & Kitchen
- Paige Jehnke, Janky Gear
- Omar Nur, Somali American Social Service Association
- Svaar Vinje, Knight's Chamber

Ex officio directors:

- Mayor Kim Norton, City of Rochester
- Josh Johnsen, City of Rochester
- John Murphy, Mayo Clinic
- Tessie Burley, University of Minnesota Rochester

2022 IMPACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Services delivered

RDA promotes downtown in the following ways:



Direct SSD support
(grants, technical assistance, etc.)

Highlights

- **13 new businesses** welcomed to downtown
- **Start-Up Event Grant:** Awarded \$22,000 to 12 recipients
- **Façade Improvement Grants:** Provided \$52,800+ for four projects
- **Winter snow removal brochure**



Internal communications
to stakeholders

- **Downtown Dialogues:**
Hosted 10 virtual meetings, 70+ presentations, 370 attendees
- **Drop-in coffee hours:** Hosted 9 in-person meet-ups
- **Stakeholder Appreciation Night:**
Celebrated annual accomplishments with our community



Marketing and external
communications

- **67.344 million** estimated earned media reach
- **775** estimated earned media stories
- **701, 531** website pageviews
- **57,850** social media followers and e-news subscribers



Public space management
and beautification

- **264** Peace Plaza rentals
- **Enhanced horticulture:**
Upgraded planters in Peace Plaza and Central Park



Clean and Safe
Ambassador Program

- **347** days of Clean and Safe Ambassador services
- **Zumbro River clean-up:** Collected 11 bags of trash



Placemaking
and programs

- **43** days of public programming (From May through October)
- **269,600** program and event attendees



Festivals and large events

- **\$7.638 million** estimated economic impact

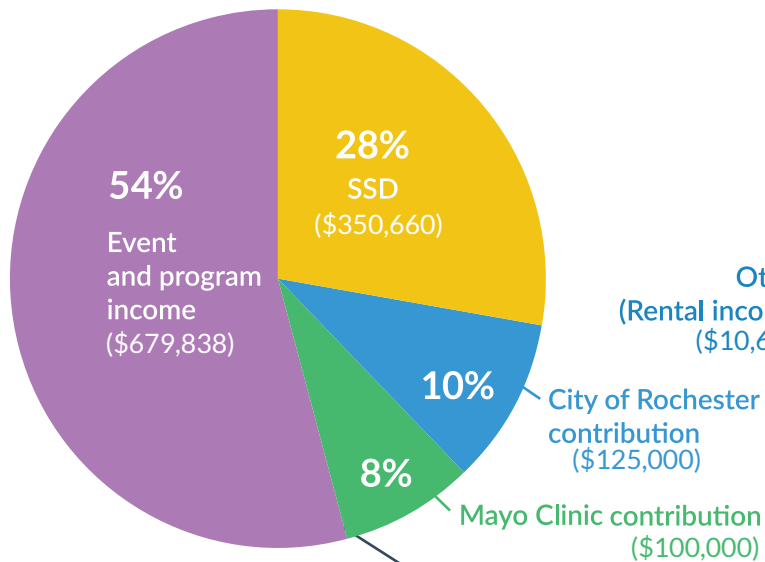
RDA created and promoted the following events to increase vitality of downtown:

<div>SOCIAL-ICE</div> <div>Adapted version in 2022</div>	<div>Fresh Air</div> <div>FITNESS</div>	<div>Sidewalk</div> <div>SESSIONS</div>	<div>pop UP</div> <div>art CART</div>	
2 days 20,780 attendees	40 dates 1,192 attendees	33 dates 61 musicians hired 26,021 seasonal attendance	40 days 446 attendees	
<div>GAMES</div> <div>ON THE</div> <div>GRASS</div>	<div>Thursdays</div> <div>DOWNTOWN</div> <div>Rochester, Minnesota</div>	<div>ART</div> <div>WALK!</div>	<div>THE DECK</div> <div>ON 4TH & ZUMBRO</div>	<div>DGS</div> <div>DOWNTOWN</div>
122 days	10 weeks 192,672 seasonal attendance	6 guided tours	2 activations	9,172 attendees
<div>Roller</div> <div>Disco</div>	<div>Here Comes Santa Claus</div>	<div>SMALL BUSINESS</div> <div>SATURDAY</div>	<div>World Cup</div> <div>Viewing Party</div>	
15,776 attendees	2,832 attendees	30 participating businesses	8 games 6 days	

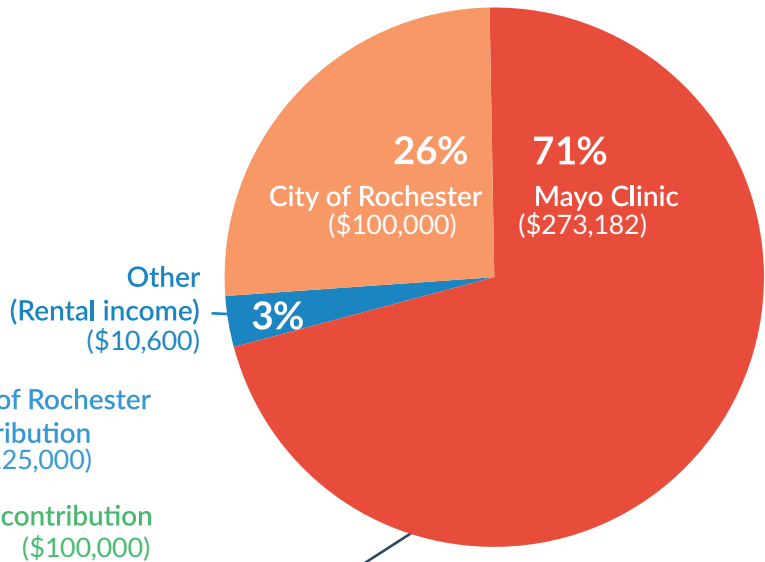
2022 FINANCIALS

RDA total income:

General income



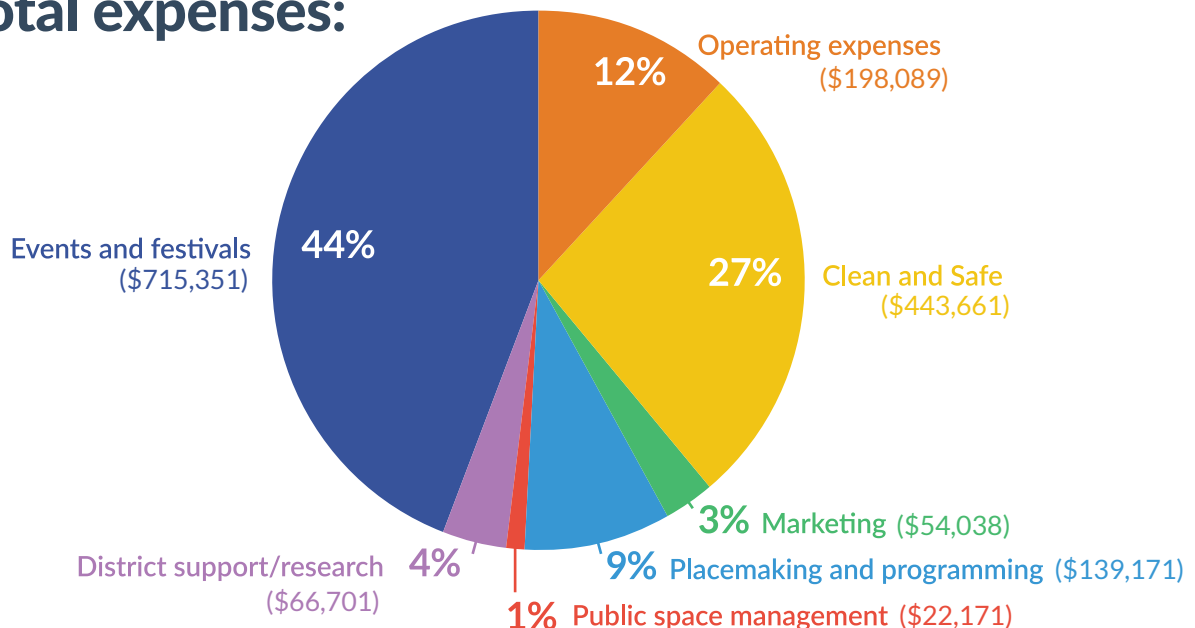
Clean and Safe restricted income



+ \$3,576 (interest income) =

Total Income: \$1,642,856

RDA total expenses:



+ \$3,674 (addition to reserves) =

Total expenses: \$1,642,856

CLEAN AND SAFE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Rochester Downtown Alliance's Clean and Safe Ambassador Program provides cleaning, hospitality, and safety services to the 44-block special service district (SSD).

"I just got out of my car and I'm greeted by Jim Bill, an awesome ambassador with the RDA. Thanks for everything you're doing down here in keeping this place clean and safe. Awesome ambassadorship!"

- City Councilmember
Kirkpatrick

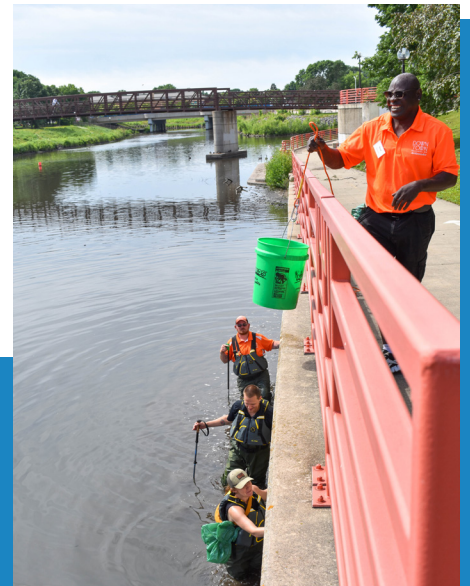


Ambassadors special projects in 2022:

In addition to regular cleaning, hospitality, and safety duties, the Ambassadors completed two special clean-up projects.

Zumbro River Clean-up

On July 1, 2022, the Clean and Safe Ambassador team and RDA staff removed debris and graffiti from the downtown portion of the Zumbro River and along the river's banks, thanks to a collaboration between RDA, the City of Rochester, and Litter Bit Better.



Fall Leaf Removal on 1st Avenue Southwest

November marked the end of fall leaf clean-up in downtown as we transitioned to snow and cold weather-related tasks. The Ambassador team worked to ensure trash and debris were reduced while clearing and removing leaves. To aid the City of Rochester's Parks and Recreation department, the Ambassador team removed 13 bags of leaves from 1st Avenue Southwest near Peace Plaza.



DowntownRochesterMN.com
info@downtownrochestermn.com
311 Broadway Ave South, Suite A2,
Rochester, MN 55904
507-216-9882

**DOWN
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Rochester, MN



Thursdays Downtown